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AUTHOR Humes, Ann; And Others

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ABSTRACT

This paper specifies the assessment of those general discourse skills that are needed for effective writing by students in grades one through six. The general discourse skills include planning/organizing, elaborating, proofreading, and editing. An introductory section provides background materials, including explanations of how the skill specifications were selected and how they are presented in this report. In the sections that follow the introduction, the general discourse skills are discussed, a table listing the language skills is presented, and the specifications are described for each skill. Each skill is described in detail, followed by the presentation of sample assessment items and descriptions of how these items are contructed. (Four related documents provide assessment specifications for other writing skills, including mechanics, language usage, spelling, and specific discourse products.) (RL)

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SPECIFICATIONS FOR 1-6 WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT
PART IV: GENERAL DISCOURSE

Ann Humes, Bruce Cronnell, Joseph Lawlor, Larry Gentry, Caroline Fieker

ABSTRACT

This paper specifies the assessment of those General Discourse skills that are needed for effective writing. (Other writing skills are specified for assessment in separate documents: Mechanics, Spelling, Language, and Discourse Products.) Each skill is described in detail; then sample assessment items are presented, followed by descriptions of how these items are constructed.

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SPECIFICATIONS FOR 1-6 WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT
PART IV: GENERAL DISCOURSE

Ann Humes, Bruce Cronnell, Joseph Lawlor, Larry Gentry, Caroline Fieker

A Language Skills Framework was provided for a project that had as its purpose the task of indicating language competencies in the English classroom, grades 1-6. These competencies are the criteria on which appropriate assessments can be based. One of the components of the framework is writing.

This paper describes the General Discourse skills of the framework, as well as the appropriate assessments for the skills. In the first section of this paper, the writing skills specifications are genenerally described as background. Then the specifications for the skills are presented.

BACKGROUND

To determine the essential writing skills, the literature was searched to identify skills that are proposed as significant by language arts authorities and by state and local competency lists. Data on the instruction in students' language arts textbooks were also analyzed for skills. A comprehensive list of skills was thus compiled and then revised to retain those skills most important for success in current school instructional programs. Thus these skills reflect writing instruction as it is, not necessarily as it should be.

Grade levels were then specified for these skills according to the level of textbook presentation, and the skills were categorized by content into a framework of writing skills. For a detailed discussion of these procedures, see Humes (1979).

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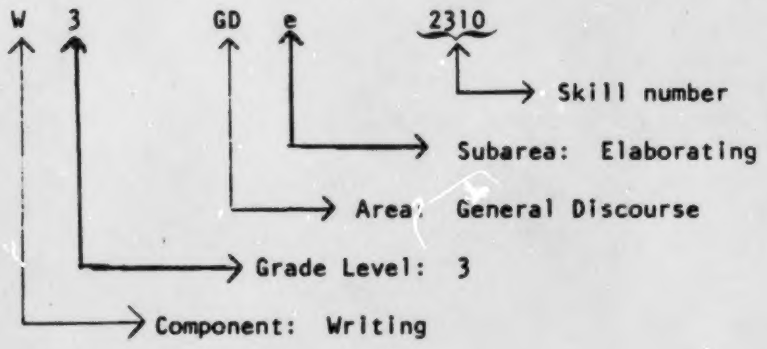
After the skills were categorized, specifications for their assessment were developed. These detailed skills specifications provide suggested information to enable others to identify each skill or to develop appropriate assessment items. The skill specifications are primarily based on analyses of several textbook series currently used in elementary schools. This approach ensures a correspondence between assessment and instruction.

Skill specifications consist of a Code Number, a Skill Statement, a Skill Description, and an Assessment description that includes both Sample Items and an Item Description.

Code Numbers

The coding system was devised to allow rapid identification of each skill. The following example illustrates the system of individual skill numbers:



As is evident from the example above, the first symbol in a code is the letter "W," which indicates the component--Writing. The next symbol, a number, indicates the grade level. Following the grade level are letters indicating the area (capital letters) and subarea (lower-case letters) of the skill. The specific skill is indicated by a four-digit code, hierarchically divided. The left digit defines a skill. This digit may be followed by three zeros or may contain digits describing the subordinate nature of the skill (e.g., skill 2300 is a subskill of skill 2000, and skill 2310 is subsumed under skill 2300).

In addition to the General Discourse covered by Part IV, skills in other areas, which are sometimes referenced in Part IV, are coded as follows:

Part I:	Mechanics--coded M
Part II:	Spelling--coded S
Part III:	Language--coded L
Part V:	Discourse Products--coded DP

Skill Statements and Skill Descriptions

Each Skill Statement briefly specifies the coded skill, and the Skill Description notes factors involved in the use of each skill, including other inherent skills and prerequisite knowledge. Insofar as possible, the Skill Descriptions are written in non-technical language so that they may be understood by the general reader; however, some basic technical terminology is used to ensure accuracy in the descriptions.

Assessment Descriptions

The Assessment descriptions include Sample Items and Item Descriptions. For most skills, there are three or more sample items. These items reflect the actual requirements of each skill. Furthermore, the items are those most appropriate for the skill to be assessed. Constructed-response items are generally included since they are often the most appropriate means of assessing writing proficiency. Where appropriate, selected-response items are delineated. In a few cases, these items are either more appropriate than or as appropriate as constructed-response items; in such cases, only the former are included.

Although selected-response items are easier to score than constructed-response items, they are frequently more exacting to prepare and may even be more difficult for students because of the amount of reading they entail. However, in some cases there is no way to lower the reading requirement and still assess the skill.

Special care is needed in the construction of distractor choices for selected-response items. Those used in the sample items and described in the Item Descriptions are carefully designed and written so that they can also be used for the diagnostic purposes discussed in the Item Descriptions. For additional information on writing appropriate assessment items and distractors, see Humes (forthcoming).

The distractor choices are also appropriate for the grade level of the skill being assessed. In the sample items, the correct choice is generally listed first for purposes of explication; however, in an actual assessment instrument, the answer choices would be randomly ordered.

Items should assess ability fairly; they should not trick students. Correspondingly, specific directions are painstakingly written for the items so that students can understand precisely what they are to do. Furthermore, examiners are expected to provide necessary assistance during administration of the items so that students' understanding of a task is increased; however, examiners must also avoid giving clues to the answers. Another caution pertains to the items themselves: Most of the items (but not the item types) have never been used with students; therefore, they should be piloted at the specified grade levels.

A description of the item type accompanies each set of sample items. The Item Description details the exact procedures for completing each item, constructing additional similar items, and creating appropriate distractors. The description also notes any other important considerations relevant to assessing the skill with the sample-item format.

The vocabulary used in the sample items (including directions) is that documented for the Harris and Jacobson (1972) core vocabulary for reading from the preprimer level through grade 5. Since technical terms are generally not included in readers but are often needed for item directions, words are also used from the Harris and Jacobson content list for English (p. 106) and from the student terms in Cronnell (1979). In addition, since Harris and Jacobson eliminated proper nouns, a list of names was compiled, based on occurrence in at least two out of four commonly used elementary school reading programs. When other proper nouns are required for specific skills, those used are ones considered most familiar to students.

Harris and Jacobson (1972) commonly strip words of various suffixes; therefore, unlisted forms of words are used according to the following grade-level schedule:

Grade 1: -s

Grade 2: -es, -ed, -ing (preferrably without spelling changes until grade 3); compounds of listed words

Grade 3: -er, -est, -ly, -y

Grade 4: contractions, possessives

Grade 5: un-

All of the previously mentioned word lists indicate the grade level at which the words can be read by most students. The words used in the sample items appear at earlier grade levels; e.g., grade 4 items are written in words appearing on the list no later than grade 3. This criterion helps ensure that reading ability does not interfere with writing performance.

Sometimes it is necessary--especially in directions--to use words not available at the grade level of the skill. Such words are identified in the assessment descriptions and should be read to the students. The limited vocabulary available for grade 1 precludes writing directions that use only words acceptable for that grade level; thus examiners should read all the directions to students in that grade level. (Reading directions for students may also be appropriate for grade 2.)

The sample items avoid language (connotative or denotative) and stereotypes that may offend individuals or groups. In particular, special attention has been given to avoiding sexism, racism, ageism, and other negative images, such as violence and excessively aggressive behavior.

In the section that follows, General Discourse skills are discussed, a table listing the General Discourse skills is presented, and the specifications are described for each skill.

GENERAL DISCOURSE

This area encompasses skills required to compose effective written products. Many of the listed skills are required for all discourse products; some skills may be important, but either optional or not relevant to a particular product; other skills are required for specific types of writing, e.g., narration, exposition.

This skill area is divided into three subareas: Planning/Organizing, Elaborating, and Proofreading and Editing. These divisions reflect a sequencing of the composing process, a sequencing in which a skill in one subarea is implemented prior to a skill in the next. Writers commonly use the skills of two or more subareas at once because these skills occur and recur simultaneously in independent writing. However, the subareas are commonly treated separately to facilitate instruction and assessment. This separation--like all the separation of categories in the LSF--is not meant to imply that students must use (or even learn) the skills separately; rather, assessment and consequent diagnosis are most effectively and efficiently implemented when skills are separated, as they are here:

Planning/Organizing. The skills of planning entail acquisition of the content for writing: discovering, selecting, and locating ideas/content. The skills of organizing involve imposing order on generated ideas/content. The writer determines the overall design that can best present the content to facilitate comprehension, and then structures it accordingly.

Elaborating. Elaborating is the primary act of composing a written product. The concomitant skills consist of those required to expand the organized content appropriately and to produce discourse that conveys the organized ideas, using appropriate devices and techniques.

Proofreading and Editing. This subarea covers both revising and refining skills. Revising involves evaluating, changing, and amending the content, organization, and elaboration of the written product. Refining involves making small but significant changes in the written product to enhance comprehensibility and to add style and individuality.

The following table lists all the skills in this category.

GENERAL DISCOURSE (GD)		Grade level for assessment					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Planning/Organizing (po)							
1000	Selects an appropriate topic when given a general subject.				▬		
2000	Writes notes on a topic.						▬
3000	Constructs a topic outline.						▬
4000	Uses chronological order.		▬				
5000	Uses logical order:						
5100	procedural order.				▬		
5200	order of importance.					▬	
5300	comparison/contrast order.						▬
6000	Uses spatial order.					▬	
7000	Uses beginning, body, and end paragraphs.						▬
8000	Uses narrative organization: Combines beginning, middle, and ending of a story.			▬			
Elaborating (e)							
1000	General elaborating						
1100	Elaborates paragraphs:						
1110	Adds details to a paragraph.*			▬			
1120	Limits a paragraph to one main idea.				▬		
1130	Constructs introductory/beginning sentence for a paragraph.				▬		
1140	Uses a topic sentence for a paragraph.					▬	
1150	Uses supporting statements for a topic sentence.					▬	

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*This skill is frequently recommended for assessment, but sample assessment items are not provided here; reasons for not providing such items are explained in the skill description.

GENERAL DISCOURSE (continued)		Grade level for assessment					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1200	Writes titles.			■			
1300	Uses connotative language to affect audience.						■
1400	Uses appropriate formal/informal language.						■
1500	Summarizes information.						■
1600	Constructs a composition from a topic outline.						■
1700	Constructs a bibliography.						■
2000	Discourse-type elaborating						
2100	Elaborates for descriptive writing: includes appropriate descriptive attributes.			■			
2200	Elaborates for narrative writing:						
2210	Includes events appropriate for a straight-line narrative.		■				
2220	Includes events appropriate for a climactic narrative.				■		
2230	Includes simple characters.				■		
2240	Completes an open-ended story.			■			
2300	Elaborates for expository writing:						
2310	Includes factual content:						
2311	information on what, where, when content.			■			
2312	procedural steps.				■		
2313	part/whole relationships.					■	
2314	comparisons/contrasts.						■

GENERAL DISCOURSE (continued)		Grade level for assessment					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
2400	Elaborates for persuasive writing:						
2410	States a point of view.						■
2420	Includes arguments for a point of view.						■
2430	Includes supporting evidence for arguments.						■
2500	Elaborates for a letter:						
2510	Includes request in a letter of invitation.			■			
2520	Includes content appropriate for a business letter.						■
Proofreading and Editing (pe)							
1000	Proofreads for final copy.*			■	■	■	■
2000	Separates long sentences by deleting and.			■			
3000	Varies the structure and length of sentences in a paragraph.						■
4000	Removes unrelated sentences.					■	
5000	Removes redundancy.					■	
6000	Rewords text to avoid word repetition:						
6100	Substitutes pronouns for nouns.					■	
6200	Substitutes synonyms for over-used terms.						■
7000	Removes ungrammatical language.						■

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*The content for assessment at each grade level consists of skills assessed at the preceding grade level.

Skill: W4 GDpo 1000

Skill Statement

Selects an appropriate topic when given a general subject.

Skill Description

The student selects an appropriate topic on which to write when he/she is assigned a general subject within a discourse type. Criteria for determining appropriateness are (1) the subject of the assignment, (2) the discourse type, (3) the audience, (4) the student, and (5) the time allowed.

The topic is appropriate to the general subject if it addresses a specific aspect of that subject. Thus, given the general subject "Homework," the student might write on "Why I do not like homework."

The topic is appropriate for descriptive discourse if it (1) can be described either from a objective/realistic viewpoint or an impressionistic/artistic viewpoint, and (2) requires the use of descriptive-writing skills. The topic is appropriate for narrative discourse if it (1) can be related through a straightline or climactic account of story events, and (2) requires the use of narrative-writing skills. The topic is appropriate for expository discourse if it (1) entails providing information on or explaining an aspect of the general subject, and (2) requires the use of expository-writing skills. The topic is not appropriate if it requires persuasive writing skills because they are presented at higher grade levels.

A topic appropriate for the audience can be addressed to the teacher, to fellow students, or to an audience outside the classroom. A topic appropriate for the student (1) is within his/her experience or he/she can obtain information about it easily, and (2) is one that is of interest to the student.

Appropriateness to the time allowed is frequently considered in relation to students' selecting topics that are too ambitious for the time they have to produce a finished product; however, this criterion is also applicable to those situations in which a student may select a topic that can be covered briefly and quickly when the time allowed is adequate for a library research project.

> Comment: This skill can be evaluated by the teacher on the basis of the student's performance when he/she is given a variety of writing tasks to complete during the course of the school year.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: The underlined words tell the subject of a report. Each person in the class is to write about a smaller part of the subject. Which topic is a smaller part of the subject?

1. Raising a Pet

A. How to Build a Doghouse
B. Wild Birds
C. Great Horses of the Past
D. Why I Love Animals

2. Cooking

A. Baking a Pie
B. The First Thanksgiving
C. Good Places to Eat
D. How to Plant a Garden

3. Safety

A. Rules for Safe Bike Riding
B. A Trip to the Hospital
C. A Famous Airplane Crash
D. Learning to Swim

Directions: Which topic is best to write about when you want to write about how something looks?

4. A. The House I Dream of Living In
B. Food That Tastes Good
C. My Favorite Song
D. A Bumpy Ride

Directions: Which topic is best for writing a story about something that really happened to you?

5. A. My First Day at This School
B. The Best Shows on TV
C. If I Had Wings . . .
D. The History of My Hometown

Directions: Which topic is best for telling exactly how to do something?

6. A. Planting a Garden
B. Why I Would Be a Good Class Leader
C. Famous Scientists and What They Do
D. How Mountains are Formed

Item Description

Items 1-3 assess the student's ability to select a specific aspect of a general subject. The stimulus is the title of a general subject. The student selects the appropriate answer from four choices. The correct answer (all A's) is a topic that can be written about without going beyond the parameters of the general subject. All distractors deal with topics that relate tangentially to the general subject, but they cannot be discussed without diverging significantly from it.

Items 4-6 assess the student's ability to select a topic that can be elaborated upon within the discourse type appropriate for the general subject. In item 4, the student is asked to choose a topic that tells what something looks like (descriptive discourse). The distractors are topics dealing with other sensory phenomena. Item 5 requires the student to select a topic that relates an actual event (narrative discourse). The three distractors for this item are topics of personal interest that do not represent actual events in the student's life experience. Item 6 calls for a topic that tells the audience how to do something (expository discourse). The distractors relate activities that are not appropriate for "how-to" assignments.

Three aspects of this skill do not lend themselves to objective assessment. They are (1) selecting a topic on the basis of personal interest, (2) selecting a topic that is appropriate to a specific time limit, and (3) selecting a topic that is appropriate to the audience. This last aspect might be assessed by items that discriminate between an audience of adults and an audience of first graders, but students may not understand adult-level content.

Audience needs and interests differ from class to class, and often within the classroom itself. Teachers must assess this skill on the basis of needs and interests that arise from their specific learning environments.

Although the ability to select an appropriate topic from a general subject on the basis of personal interest is a relatively common skill requirement, this particular skill is not amenable to formal assessment. Children's individual interests are extremely diverse and cannot be generalized. Thus teachers must assess this skill on the basis of individual performance in actual writing situations.

Selecting a topic that can be dealt with within a certain time limit is frequently relative to the ability and experiential background of the student. A student who has made a hobby of Civil War studies may be able to produce an outstanding report on that topic within a few days, while one who knows very little about the Civil War may require weeks to produce an average report. Additionally, almost any topic can be given some treatment within a specified time limit; quality and thoroughness may be sacrificed for a hurried and sketchy outline. This skill is best assessed by observing the student's ability to produce a variety of reports within various units of time.

Skill: W6 GDpo 2000

Skill Statement

Writes notes on a topic.

Skill Description

Given a topic, the student writes preliminary notes on it to prepare for writing on the topic. Notes are any form of written language that records ideas, facts, etc. They may be single words, phrases, or sentences. Sometimes they are sentences stripped of their function words; e.g., "Lincoln was born in 1809" → "Lincoln born 1809." Although notes are not required to take a particular linguistic form, they are expected to include only critical facts and ideas.

Notes are written in preparation for composing, not as the act of composing itself. At this point in the composing process, notes are not necessarily organized; they are only generated. (See Skill W6 GDpo 3000 for the organization of notes.)

Two kinds of notes are commonly written in preparation for writing a composition: "brainstorming" notes and reference notes. These are explained below.

(1) "Brainstorming" notes are the ideas that the student generates by thinking about the topic. The content of the notes depends on the type of writing required—details for description, events for narration, facts for exposition, arguments for persuasion. These notes are likely to be the less organized of the two types. "Brainstorming" notes may simply consist of a series of words and/or phrases that are unintelligible to anyone other than the writer. Therefore, these notes are not assessed here.

(2) Reference notes are often used when a student is asked to write about a factual topic. She/he then goes to a reference source (most frequently an encyclopedia at this grade level, but other print--and perhaps even nonprint--sources may be used). While reading about the topic, the student writes ("takes") notes on important facts. Two important subskills are required to write notes from reference sources: (1) the student must identify main ideas and details in the reference (see Fiege-Kollmann, 1979), and (2) the student must select only those ideas/details that are relevant to the topic of the planned composition.

Assessment

Comments: Ideally, a constructed-response task should be used to assess this skill. However, scoring constructed-response items would be extremely difficult considering that preliminary notes are not necessarily organized or composed in any particular form. Furthermore, notes are usually intended to be read only by the writer; they are not "products" in themselves. Therefore, constructed-response items are not included here.

The selected-response items below are designed to assess the student's ability to generate appropriate content for a topic from a reference source.

Sample Items

Directions: Students in a sixth grade class were writing reports on the feeding habits of whales. The students found the following article on one kind of whale. Read the article.

THE BLUE WHALE

The blue whale is the largest animal that has ever lived. Blue whales grow up to 100 feet long, and they can weigh as much as 100 tons. These whales are blue in color, but they often have yellow spots on their undersides.

Blue whales feed on tiny shrimp called "krill." Inside the whale's mouth are thin, bony plates called "baleen." The whale pumps sea water through the baleen, and the krill are filtered from the water.

Three students took notes on this article for their reports on the feeding habits of whales. Read the notes that were taken by each student. Which sentence best describes each set of notes?

1. The blue whale
- eats tiny shrimp called "krill"
- pumps water through "baleen" plates
- baleen filters out the krill

A. The notes have all the facts that are important for the report.
B. The notes have some of the facts that are important.
C. The notes have none of the facts that are important.

2. The blue whale
   - grows to 100 feet long
   - eats tiny shrimp
   - filters water through bony plates

A. The notes have all the facts that are important for the report.
B. The notes have some of the facts that are important.
C. The notes have none of the facts that are important.

3. The blue whale
   - largest animal that ever lived
   - weighs up to 100 tons
   - blue in color, with yellow spots

A. The notes have all the facts that are important for the report.
B. The notes have some of the facts that are important.
C. The notes have none of the facts that are important.

Comment: The technical terms krill and baleen may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level. However, the terms are included to emphasize their importance to the topic. Furthermore, both terms are explicitly defined in the stimulus so that comprehension difficulties are minimized.

Item Description

The stimulus is a two-paragraph "reference article" that presents information about the topic specified in the item directions. The first paragraph of the article contains information that relates to the general subject of the planned paper (i.e., whales). The second paragraph contains information pertaining to the particular topic of the paper (i.e., feeding habits of whales). Thus only the facts contained in the second paragraph are relevant to the planned composition. This paragraph contains three important points: (1) blue whales eat tiny shrimp called "krill," (2) blue whales have thin plates in their mouths called "baleen," and (3) the whale filters water through the baleen to catch the krill.

The student is required to select the sentence that describes the notes' relevance to the research paper. The "correct" set of notes (item 1) contains all three relevant facts from the article. One incorrect set of notes (item 2) contains one irrelevant fact (i.e., the length of the whale) and two incomplete (but relevant) points (i.e., the shrimp and the plates are mentioned, but the technical terms are not included). The other incorrect set of notes (item 3) contains three irrelevant facts (i.e., all points relate to the whale's physical characteristics rather than its feeding habits).

Skill: W6 GDpo 3000

Skill Statement

Constructs a topic outline.

Skill Description

Given a subject, the student constructs a topic outline. The outline may suggest an essay in any discourse mode or form (except poetry). The purpose of constructing an outline is to organize one's thoughts/ideas/facts in preparation for writing. (The follow-up skill, W6 GDe 1600, involves writing an essay from the outline.) For consistency in evaluation, this skill is assessed by providing the student with unorganized content and requiring him/her to organize it.

Outline construction consists of two major subskills: organizing and formatting. For organization, related ideas are grouped together; each main idea (topic) is followed by its related subtopics. For format, two subskills are included: indentation and numbering/lettering. Each main topic is at the margin, with subtopics indented under it. Main topics are preceded by (capital) Roman numerals; subtopics are preceded by capital letters. (Outlines can be constructed with additional levels, but such detailed organization is not usually taught in elementary school.) The letters and numbers are followed by periods, and each topic phrase begins with a capital letter; however, these are less critical skills and are not assessed.

A topic outline, for which the topics are expressed in the form of phrases, is distinguished from a sentence outline (not included in the LSF), for which the topics are expressed in the form of sentences. This distinction is probably not critical to the construction of an appropriate outline, especially since the goal of outline construction is to guide writing and not to serve as an independent, final product. Topic outlines are generally constructed with parallel syntactic structures for the topics.

Assessment

Comment: For ease of assessment, the three subskills of outline construction are assessed separately with selected-response items. Then a constructed-response item is presented that combines all of the skills.

(1) Organization

Sample Items

Directions: The outline has some parts missing. Read the outline and answer the questions.

1. Homework - No or Yes?

I. Reasons against homework.
A. ______________________________
B. Doesn't let you get away from school.

II. ______________________________
A. Keeps you out of trouble after school.
B. Helps you learn more.

What goes on line A?

A. Takes time away from your other activities.
B. Reasons for homework.
C. Homework in math and spelling.
D. Playing baseball at recess.

What goes on line II?

A. Reasons for homework.
B. Takes time away from your other activities.
C. Homework in math and spelling.
D. Playing baseball at recess.

2. Animals Belonging to Different Groups

I. Cats
A. Lions
B. Tigers
C. ________________

II. ______________________________
A. Parrots
B. Robins
C. Owls

What goes on line C?

A. Leopards
B. Birds
C. Meows
D. Dogs

What goes on line II?

A. Birds
B. Leopards
C. Feathers
D. Bees

3. Taking Music Lessons--A Good or Bad Idea?

I. ____________________
    A. Learn to read music
    B. Learn to play musical instrument
    C. Take part in school concerts

II. A bad idea
    A. Takes too much time from other activities
    B. ______________________________
    C. Adds to homework assignments

What goes on line I?

- A. A good idea
- B. Must play same piece over and over
- C. Violin or piano lessons
- D. After-school sports

What goes on line B?

- A. Must play same piece over and over
- B. A good idea
- C. Violin or piano lessons
- D. After-school sports

Item Description

The stimulus consists of an outline (including a title) with two main topics, each with two to three subtopics, for a total of 6-10 lines. For each main topic, at least one line is missing--for either the main topic or its subtopic. However, at least one main topic must be included in the outline and at least one subtopic must be included under each main topic.

The student chooses the appropriate phrase for each missing line. The choices are varied as follows:

- A. Correct answer.
- B. Phrase missing from another place in the outline.
- C. Phrase tangentially related to the topic, but not fitting in the outline; e.g., for item 1, choice C is about homework, but it makes no sense in the outline.
- D. Phrase unrelated to the topic, but indirectly associated with it; e.g., for item 1, both homework and recess are associated with school, although recess is not directly related to homework.

(2) Indentation

Sample Items

Directions: Which outline is correctly indented?

1. A. Places I Would Like to Visit

London
    Museums
    Palaces
Africa
    Wild animals
    Different people

B. Places I Would Like to Visit

    London
Museums
Palaces
    Africa
Wild animals
Different people

C. Places I Would Like to Visit

London
    Museums
Palaces
    Africa
Wild animals
    Different people

D. Places I Would Like to Visit

London
    Museums
        Palaces
Africa
    Wild animals
        Different people

W6 GDpo 3000 (continued)

2. A. *Stories We Like to Read*

Adventure
Kidnapped
Treasure Island
Eskimo Boy
Animal Stories
The Wind in the Willows
Charlotte's Web

B. *Stories We Like to Read*

Adventure
Kidnapped
Treasure Island
Eskimo Boy
Animal Stories
The Wind in the Willows
Charlotte's Web

C. *Stories We Like to Read*

Adventure
Kidnapped
Treasure Island
Eskimo Boy
Animal Stories
The Wind in the Willows
Charlotte's Web

D. *Stories We Like to Read*

Adventure
Kidnapped
Treasure Island
Eskimo Boy
Animal Stories
The Wind in the Willows
Charlotte's Web

W6 GDpo 3000 (continued)

3. A. <u>Favorite After-School Activities</u>

```
Sports
     Basketball
     Football
     Baseball
Club Meetings
     Girl Scouts
     Boy Scouts
```

B. <u>Favorite After-School Activities</u>

```
     Sports
Basketball
Football
Baseball
     Club Meetings
Girl Scouts
Boy Scouts
```

C. <u>Favorite After-School Activities</u>

```
Sports
     Basketball
Football
     Baseball
Club Meetings
     Girl Scouts
Boy Scouts
```

D. <u>Favorite After-School Activities</u>

```
Sports
     Basketball
          Football
               Baseball
Club Meetings
     Girl Scouts
          Boy Scouts
```

Comment: These items include some words that students may not be able to read: <u>London</u>, <u>Africa</u>, <u>Eskimo</u>, <u>Kidnapped</u>, <u>Charlotte</u>. However, since students do not have to read these words in order to respond correctly (they need only focus on the indentation), they should not pose a problem.

Item Description

The content of the outline consists of a title, two main topics, and two to three subtopics for each main topic. The correct answer is the correctly indented outline: main topics at the margin, subtopics indented under the main topics and aligned with each other.

The distractors have the same outline content and order, but take the following forms:

B. Reverse indentation of the correct form; i.e., subtopics at margin and main topics indented.

C. Alternation of lines for margin and indentation; i.e., the first, third, fifth, and seventh lines at margin, the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth lines indented.

D. "Step" indentation of lines: main topics at margin; first subtopic indented; second subtopic indented under the first; third subtopic indented under the second.

Comment: Since only indentation is being assessed with this item type, numbering and lettering are not used; they are assessed in the following section. Moreover, since the indentation is wrong in three choices, it is not possible to include numbering and lettering.

(3) Numbering/Lettering

Sample Items

Directions: Which outline is correctly numbered and lettered?

1. A. **Working Dogs**

I. Sheep dogs
A. Collie
B. German Shepherd
II. Guard dogs
A. Great Dane
B. Boxer

B. **Working Dogs**

I. Sheep dogs
II. Collie
III. German Shepherd
IV. Guard dogs
V. Great Dane
VI. Boxer

C. Working Dogs

A. Sheep dogs
  B. Collie
  C. German Shepherd
D. Guard dogs
  E. Great Dane
  F. Boxer

D. Working Dogs

I. Sheep dogs
  1. Collie
  2. German Shepherd
II. Guard dogs
  1. Great Dane
  2. Boxer

2. A. America's Special Holidays

I. Independence Day
  A. Celebrated July 4th of each year
  B. Celebrates signing of the Declaration of Independence
II. Thanksgiving
  A. Celebrated the fourth Thursday in November
  B. Celebrates the Pilgrims' first harvest in America

B. America's Special Holidays

I. Independence Day
  II. Celebrated July 4th of each year
  III. Celebrates signing of the Declaration of Independence
IV. Thanksgiving
  V. Celebrated the fourth Thursday in November
  VI. Celebrates the Pilgrims' first harvest in America

C. America's Special Holidays

A. Independence Day
  B. Celebrated July 4th of each year
  C. Celebrates signing of the Declaration of Independence
D. Thanksgiving
  E. Celebrated the fourth Thursday in November
  F. Celebrates the Pilgrims' first harvest in America

D. America's Special Holidays

I. Independence Day
  1. Celebrated July 4th of each year
  2. Celebrates signing of the Declaration of Independence
II. Thanksgiving
  1. Celebrated the fourth Thursday in November
  2. Celebrates the Pilgrims' first harvest in America

3. A. Garden Plants

I. Flower Gardens
  A. Roses
  B. Daisies
II. Vegetable Gardens
  A. Tomatoes
  B. Beans
  C. Peas

B. Garden Plants

I. Flower Gardens
  II. Roses
  III. Daisies
IV. Vegetable Gardens
  V. Tomatoes
  VI. Beans
  VII. Peas

C. Garden Plants

A. Flower Gardens
  B. Roses
  C. Daisies
D. Vegetable Gardens
  E. Tomatoes
  F. Beans
  G. Peas

D. Garden Plants

I. Flower Gardens
  1. Roses
  2. Daisies
II. Vegetable Gardens
  1. Tomatoes
  2. Beans
  3. Peas

Comment: These items include some words that students may not be able to read: collie, German, Dane, July, Declaration, Thursday, November, Pilgrams. However, since students do not have to read these words in order to respond correctly (they need only focus on the numbers and letters), they should not pose a problem.

Item Description

The content of the outline consists of a title, two main topics, and two to three subtopics for each main topic. The correct answer is the outline with the correct numbering and lettering: (capital) Roman numerals for the main topics; capital letters for the subtopics.

The distractors have the same outline content, order, and indentation, but take the following forms:

B: All topics and subtopics numbered in order with (capital) Roman numerals.

C: All topics and subtopics lettered in order with capital letters.

D: Topics numbered correctly in order (I and II); subtopics numbered in order with Arabic numerals (1, 2, and 3).

(4) Subskills combined

Comment: The complete skill of constructing a topic outline can be assessed with a constructed-response task. Although this task form is preferrable to a collection of multiple-choice items, it requires more time to assess and score.

Sample Item

Directions: These are some ideas for a composition about homework. The ideas are in the wrong order. The main ideas are mixed in with the other ideas. Write an outline that puts all the ideas in the right order. It must also show the main ideas. Be sure to use correct outline form; indent correctly and use letters and numbers correctly.

Homework--No or Yes?

Helps you learn more
Doesn't let you get away from school
Reasons against homework
Takes time away from other activities
Reasons for homework
Keeps you out of trouble after school

Item Description

The stimulus consists of the content for an outline: a title and six to eight "notes" that can be formed into a good outline, with two main topics and two to three subtopics for each main topic. (To ensure that a good outline is possible, an outline should be written first and the lines scrambled.)

Scoring Key for Teacher Use

The skills array of the key's matrix consists of the features of good outline construction required by this skill. Performance ratings of good, acceptable, or unacceptable are given on each criterion in accordance with the rating considerations that the scoring guide describes. Thus the scoring key can be used to determine a total score by assigning numerical equivalents to the good/acceptable/unacceptable scores. It can also be used to elicit diagnostic information about individual component skills.

Scoring Criteria	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Includes all the listed ideas.	____		____
Includes subtopics under main topics.	____	____	____
Indents correctly.	____	____	____
Uses numbers and letters correctly.	____	____	____

Comment: The "Includes all the listed ideas" criterion has only good and unacceptable ratings because a student either does or does not include all the ideas.

Scoring Guide

The scoring guide describes the guidelines for determining what constitutes a good, acceptable, or unacceptable score on each criterion in the scoring key.

Includes all the listed ideas.

Good: All six ideas are included in the outline.

Unacceptable: One or more of the ideas are not included in the outline.

Includes subtopics under main topics.

Main topic: Reasons against homework
  Subtopics: Doesn't let you get away from school
    Takes time away from other activities
Main topic: Reasons for homework
  Subtopics: Helps you learn more
    Keeps you out of trouble after school

Note: The order of the main topics and of the subtopics is not critical; any order is acceptable.

Good: Each main topic has its two subtopics under it.

Acceptable: Each main topic has at least one correct subtopic under it.

Unacceptable: One or both of the main topics have no correct subtopics under it/them.

Indents correctly.

Note: This criterion is independent of the first two criteria; that is, correct indentation can occur even if some ideas are not listed and/or main topics and subtopics are not grouped appropriately.

Good: Main topics are aligned with each other; subtopics are aligned with each other and indented under the main topics.

Acceptable: Indentation is generally appropriate, but there are one or two errors in alignment or indentation.

Unacceptable: Most or all of the alignment and indentation is wrong.

Uses numbers and letters correctly.

Note: This criterion is independent of the first two criteria; that is, correct numbering and lettering can occur even if some ideas are not listed and/or main topics and subtopics are not grouped appropriately.

Good: Main topics (or those ideas at the margin) are numbered in order with (capital) Roman numerals. Subtopics (or those ideas that are indented) are lettered alphabetically with capital letters.

Acceptable: The numbers and letters are generally appropriate, but there are one or two errors.

Unacceptable: Most or all of the numbers and letters are wrong.

Skill: W2 GDpo 4000

Skill Statement

Uses chronological order.

Skill Description

The student organizes the content of his/her writing in chronological (time) order. At this grade level this skill is relevant to straightline narratives. A narrative presents an experience to an audience, giving the impression of passage in time.

The incidents of the narrative are organized in the order of their occurrence. For example, the account of a child's attending a party would be arranged according to (1) arrival at the party, (2) the party activities, (3) departure from the party rather than (1) arrival, (2) departure, (3) party activities. The cohesion of a straightline narrative is dependent upon this appropriate ordering.

At higher grade levels this skill pertains to writing a climactic narrative (see Skill W4 DPpr 3000). For a climactic narrative, events are selected and arranged to build toward a climax. Thus students need to use chronological ordering in climactic narration in order to "violate" it by arranging, for example, the simultaneous occurrence of events (e.g., "Meanwhile . . . ," "At the same time . . ."). However, climactic narration is often strictly chronological without variation in the units of time.

Also at higher grade levels, chronological ordering is used to organize expository writing (e.g., a report on an event in history, the account of the proceedings of a meeting).

Comment: Procedural order, a form of chronological order, is often used in expository compositions. However, procedural order is such a specific type of chronological order that it is treated as a separate skill (see Grade 4: Skill W4 GDpo 5100).

Assessment

Comment: This skill is partially assessed by the writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W2 DPpr 2000. See those specifications for the sample item and item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion for ordering sentences.

Since pictures must be used in the writing sample at this grade level to cue student writing while limiting the range of possible responses to be accounted for in the scoring guidelines, the placement of the pictures on the page minimizes the student's task of chronologically arranging events. Consequently, the selected-response items below are included to provide direct assessment of this skill.

Sample items

Directions: The sentences in the story are not in the right order. Read the title and the sentences. Then circle the letter that answers each question.

1. THE SURPRISE IN THE BOX

A. Mary looked in the box.
B. Mary saw a funny little man in the box.
C. Mary found the small blue box.

Which sentence should be first in the story? A B C

Which sentence should be the middle of the story? A B C

Which sentence should be last in the story? A B C

2. A WAGON RIDE

A. The dog jumped out of the wagon and ran away.
B. Judy gave the dog a ride in the wagon.
C. Judy put the dog in her wagon.

Which sentence should be first in the story? A B C

Which sentence should be the middle of the story? A B C

Which sentence should be last in the story? A B C

3. THE FOX AND THE RABBIT

A. The old fox saw the little white rabbit.
B. The fox ran after the rabbit.
C. The fox could not catch the rabbit.

Which sentence should be first in the story? A B C

Which sentence should be the middle of the story? A B C

Which sentence should be last in the story? A B C

W2 GDpo 4000 (continued)

Item Description

The stimulus is the title of a hypothetical story (narrative writing is the only discourse type appropriate for assessing this skill at this grade level). The student identifies an appropriate sequence of events for a simple story by determining which is the beginning, middle, and ending sentence. The title should be broad enough to encompass the events listed for the story and narrow enough to limit the arrangements of those events.

The answer choices should be amenable to only one possible sequence. That sequence should be readily evident. Transitional expressions that suggest time order should not be used in the sentences because students might choose sentences on the basis of the time word rather than on the event arrangement of the story.

Pronouns are not substituted for nouns in any of the sentences (even though this does make the stories stylistically awkward). If pronouns (e.g., she) were used, students who recognize the need for pronoun referents could use that knowledge in determining the correct order of the sentences. For example, the sentence "She looked in the box," could not be the first sentence in the story because the referent for the pronoun would not have been identified.

The sentences should be presented in different order for the items so that all possible rearrangements must be manipulated by the students. Some items should also present the events in the correct sequence.

The events/choices for this item type can be expanded so that the event is described by a paragraph rather than by a single sentence. However, this revision would increase the difficulty of the items; it would also assess a skill at a higher grade level, Skill W3 GDpo 8000: Combines beginning, middle, and ending of a story.

Skill: W4 GDpo 5100

Skill Statement

Uses logical order: procedural order.

Skill Description

The student arranges factual content logically in the order by which a procedure is completed. The content should exactly parallel the procedure to be undertaken so that the procedure may be successfully completed by the individual who is reading the directions.

Assessment

Comments: This is an important subskill of writing an expository piece that explains a procedure. Although this skill may not always be listed separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students cannot complete procedural explanations without employing this skill.

This skill is assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W4 DPpr 4000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W5 GDpo 5200

Skill Statement

Uses logical order: order of importance.

Skill Description

The student logically orders the factual content, or the points he/she wishes to make, by order of importance. The ordering can reflect either decreasing or increasing importance, but it must be consistent.

Decreasing importance is the order generally used for newspaper accounts. The most important material is presented first and is followed by information of decreasing importance. The "who" information is generally first and succeeded by the "what" information. These two are sometimes reversed, i.e., "what" and then "who." Specific content determines the importance and inclusion/exclusion of the "why," "when," "where," and "how" information. Although this order of presentation helps ensure that the writer's audience will read what is most important even if that audience does not read the entire piece, its use does risk loss of audience interest.

Order of increasing importance entails the sequencing of elements from the least to the most important information. The advantage of this ordering is that it tends to sustain audience interest.

Comment: This is an important expository-writing skill, as well as a skill that is often used to present a convincing argument. Although this skill may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students cannot complete some listed expository and persuasive products without employing this skill (e.g., news articles).

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for sixth grade, which is described for Skill W6 DPpr 5000. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion for organizing arguments logically. However, if assessment is desired at this grade level, the following selected-response items may be used.

Sample Items

Directions: Newspaper writers usually put the most important facts at the beginning of their stories. Read the headline and the first sentence of each news story. Which sentence should come next in each story?

1. MAYOR GIVES STORM WARNING

The mayor of Ocean City ordered everyone to leave the beach areas because a giant storm is fast approaching the coast.

A. People living near the beach were told to leave their homes by noon today.
B. Storms often strike the coast at this time of year.
C. The mayor's own house is located near the beach.

2. HAWKS BEAT TIGERS

The Oakgrove Hawks beat the Summertown Tigers 5 to 4 in a baseball game last night.

A. The Hawks won the game on a home run by Jackie Brown.
B. The Hawks and the Tigers usually play close games.
C. Yesterday was the birthday of the Hawks' coach.

3. FOREST FIRE BREAKS OUT

Fire broke out early today in the Black Canyon area of Pineview State Park.

A. At noon, the 500-acre fire was still out of control.
B. Last year, a fire destroyed one thousand acres of forest in the same area.
C. Tired fire fighters are resting at Lodgepole Camp Grounds.

Item Description

The stimulus is a newspaper headline and the first sentence of a news story. Using a newspaper stimulus facilitates the ordering of information by decreasing importance. Other types of expository and persuasive writing also organize information by order of importance, but the relative importance of ideas generally depends on a subjective evaluation of the information. In news stories, however, the order of importance is more readily apparent, thus providing a convenient vehicle for assessing this skill. Moreover, the composition of news stories is frequently taught in elementary textbooks. Therefore, most students should be familiar with the organization of information in news stories.

The headline and first sentence of the news story present the most important facts. The student selects the sentence (all choice A's) that logically follows the lead sentence in order of decreasing importance. One distractor sentence (choice B's) presents information that is usually considered as "background material" in news stories. That is, the information provides historical perspective for the current news event, but it does not specifically describe the event (e.g., The Hawks and the Tigers usually play close games). Background information is often included in news stories, but it is clearly less important than the factual details of the current news event.

A second distractor sentence (choice C's) presents information that relates to the event being described, but the information is clearly not significant to the story (e.g., Yesterday was the birthday of the Hawks' coach).

Comment: The distractors for these items should be carefully constructed so that they are clearly less important than the correct response. Students should not be required to make subtle editorial evaluations on the relative importance of information.

Skill: W6 GDpo 5300

Skill Statement

Uses logical order: comparison/contrast order.

Skill Description

The student uses comparison/contrast order to organize factual content logically. Contrasts at this grade level can be ordered by the following methods:

1. Alternating contrasts: The identification of a characteristic/feature of one of the elements being contrasted is followed immediately by the parallel characteristic in the other element (e.g., A bicycle has two wheels, but a tricycle has three wheels).

2. Block contrast: The characteristics/features of one element being contrasted are all identified; then the parallel characteristics for the other element are identified (e.g., The bike has two wheels, is painted red, and has a leather seat. The tricycle has three wheels, is painted blue, and has a metal seat).

Comparisons at this grade level can be ordered by the following methods:

1. Alternating comparison: See alternating contrast above.

2. Block comparison: See block contrast above.

3. Simultaneous comparison: The two members are compared in the same sentence with the characteristic feature that is similar--coordinate nouns are used with one statement of similarity (e.g., The bicycle and the tricycle are both painted red).

Students at this grade level may combine the above methods. Knowledge of the terms comparison, contrast, alternating, block, simultaneous is not prerequisite to this skill.

Comment: Although this skill may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students must employ this skill to produce comparison/contrast products that are listed.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for Skill W6 DPpr 4000.

Skill: W5 GDpo 6000

Skill Statement

Uses spatial order.

Skill Description

The student uses spatial ordering to organize a paragraph that describes an object or entity. He/she selects a point from which the description of an object can begin and then proceeds to describe the object in that directional order.

Description may begin with an outstanding feature and then proceed to features surrounding that feature. However, at this grade level, students are most likely to describe items by order of place. Thus in describing a room, for example, the student may start at one side and move around it; in describing an object, he/she might move from top to bottom, bottom to top, or side to side. In describing a landscape, he/she might work from near to far or from far to near.

Knowledge of the term spatial order is not prerequisite to this skill.

Comment: This is an important subskill of descriptive writing. Although it may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students must employ this skill to complete descriptive compositions that are listed.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is best assessed by a writing sample (see Skill W5 DPpr 1000). If a writing sample is not used, spatial ordering may be assessed by the selected-response items described below.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the sentences in the paragraph that tells about the picture. The sentences go in one direction. Which sentence should go next?

1. The clown has a large mouth painted with a smile. His nose looks like a round ball. He has two stars for eyes.

[Picture of the upper part of a clown with a pointed hat, shaggy hair, stars for eyes, a round nose, a large, smiling mouth, a ruff-type collar, and a necktie with stars. His ears are very large and stand out at the sides of his head.]

A. His hair is very messy.
B. His tie has many stars on it.
C. His hat looks like a cone.

2. Our classroom is crowded with people and things. People in the back row have very little room. Ann is the first student in the row. Dan comes next. Tom is smiling because he is in the middle.

Picture of a row of six students at desks. A flag is at the left end of the row. A table with books is at the right end. To the back of students is a bookcase with books. Students have names below them, in left to right order: Ann, Dan, Tom, Nan, Mary, Bill.

A. Nan usually sits next to him.
B. A flag stands at the end of the desks.
C. Bill sits at the last desk.

3. A fence stands at the edge of the field. Two cows are grazing just beyond the fence. There are some trees behind the cows.

Picture of a landscape. In the foreground is a dirt road. At the far edge of the road is a fence. Two cows are grazing in the field beyond the fence. Behind the cows is a small grove of trees. Beyond the trees is a lake with a small island visible in its center.

A. A lake is visible beyond the trees.
B. A dirt road runs along the fence.
C. There is a small island in the middle of the lake.

Item Description

The stimulus is a picture and a paragraph that describes part of the picture. The picture should depict an object that has salient descriptive features in one direction (e.g., up and down, side to side). The sentences in the paragraph proceed in one directional order. They cover at least three descriptive features in the picture so that directional order is conveyed.

The student selects from three choices the sentence that would be written next in space order. The correct answer describes the next feature in directional order after the last sentence in the paragraph. Two distractor types are included. The first distractor jumps more than one feature in the wrong direction (all type _B_'s); it is the easiest distractor type. Another distractor jumps too many features ahead in the correct direction (all type _C_'s).

A third possible distractor type describes a feature that is adjacent to the last feature described in the paragraph, but is in the wrong direction (see the ears in item 1). Although this is an appropriate distractor, it is too sophisticated for students at the elementary level. Consequently, this item type is restricted to two distractors to limit item difficulty.

Skill: W6 GDpo 7000

Skill Statement

Uses beginning, body, and end paragraphs.

Skill Description

The student organizes written discourse by using identifiable beginning, body, and end paragraphs.

> Comment: This skill is applicable to descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing. Narrative writing is covered by a separate skill, "Combines beginning, middle, and ending of a story" (see Skill W3 GDpo 8000).

The specific characteristics of beginning, body, and end paragraphs are determined by the discourse type. These characteristics are explained below.

> Descriptive Writing - The beginning paragraph usually establishes the writer's vantage point and identifies the object or scene being described. Paragraphs in the body add descriptive detail, progressing in spatial order (e.g., top to bottom; exterior to interior). The ending paragraph may summarize the writer's impressions of the object or scene that has been described.

> Expository Writing - The beginning paragraph often contains a statement of theme or purpose and a list of the topics to be covered in the composition. The body contains supporting paragraphs for the stated theme, and may include procedural steps and explanations. The ending paragraph usually includes a summary of the points discussed in the body, a conclusion drawn from those points, and/or a restatement of the theme or purpose.

> Persuasive Writing - The beginning paragraph usually contains a statement of the writer's opinion. Paragraphs in the body provide supporting evidence for the writer's opinion, and may include a discussion of the possible objections to that opinion. The ending paragraph usually draws a conclusion from the arguments presented in the body, and may include a restatement of the opinion.

Students at this grade level should not be expected to include all the characteristics noted above. Elementary students should only be expected to use a general organizational structure that suggests a beginning, middle, and end.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: The paragraphs in the composition below are not in the correct order. Read the paragraphs and decide which order they should be in. Then answer the questions following the paragraphs.

Paragraph I

First, you should always ride your bike on the right side of the street. You should also obey all traffic lights and stop signs just like the cars do. When you cross a street, you must be sure to look for approaching traffic.

Paragraph II

Riding a bicycle can be a lot of fun, but there are some important rules that bike-riders should know. If everyone paid attention to these rules, there would be fewer accidents with bicycles.

Paragraph III

As you can see, these rules are very simple. If you obey them, you'll have fun and keep yourself from getting hurt at the same time.

Paragraph IV

There are also some special things to remember if you ride your bike at night. You should always have a light on your bicycle so that drivers can see you. If you wear light-colored clothes, that will make you more visible, too.

1. Which paragraph should come first?

A. II
B. I
C. IV
D. III

2. Which paragraphs should come in the middle?

A. I and IV
B. II and III
C. I and III
D. II and IV

3. Which paragraph should come last?

   A. III
   B. IV
   C. I
   D. II

Item Description

The student determines the correct order of four paragraphs in a composition. For these items, the paragraphs compose an expository composition. The correct responses are choice A's. The beginning paragraph (II) introduces the topic (rules for bicyclists). The two paragraphs in the body provide a list of general rules (paragraph I) and rules for bicycling at night (paragraph IV). The end paragraph (III) draws a conclusion from the discussion in the body.

> Comment: This item could be made more difficult by requiring the student to determine the correct order of the two paragraphs in the body of the composition. This would, however, require recognition of transitional expressions and logical order, which are assessed separately in the LSF (see Skills W5 Lt 1000 and W5 GDpo 5200).

Paragraphs II (the beginning) and III (the ending) are similar in that they are more general than the other two paragraphs. However, the end paragraph does not mention the topic specifically, but only refers to "these rules." Thus, it is not an appropriate beginning paragraph.

An expository composition is used as the stimulus because it allows a clear distinction between beginning, middle, and end paragraphs. A persuasive essay can also be used as the stimulus, but descriptive writing is not recommended. The beginning, body, and end paragraphs of descriptive essays are usually not so distinct as they are in other discourse types.

This item places a heavy emphasis on reading comprehension abilities. Such emphasis is unavoidable in a selected-response assessment of this skill. For this reason, constructed-response assessment may be more appropriate. Therefore, assessment of this skill is also included in a writing sample at this grade level (see Skill W6 DPpr 4000).

Skill: W3 GDpo 8000

Skill Statement

Uses narrative organization: Combines beginning, middle, and ending of a story.

Skill Description

The student combines parts of a story to produce a story with a coherent sense of beginning, middle, and ending. Implicit in this skill is the ability to arrange events in chronological order (Skill W4 GDpo 4000).

At this grade level, the beginning, middle, and ending of a story are each a paragraph in length. The beginning paragraph should introduce the characters and put them in a setting that is conducive to a problem situation, which is foreshadowed. (The situation may be one in which one character is in conflict with nature; thus nature becomes the other "character.") The middle paragraph should develop the problem. The concluding paragraph should resolve the problem in the most logical way for the given characters and should not introduce new characters.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: The parts of this story are not in the right order. Read the title and the parts of the story. Then answer each question.

THE BRAVE GIRL

A. Just ahead there was a big tree hanging over the river. Judy reached as far as she could. She pulled hard on a branch, and it held. Soon Judy and her brother were climbing up the river bank to safety.

B. Judy and her little brother walked across the old bridge. It had been raining for days, and the river was running high. Suddenly the bridge started to move. With a loud roar, the bridge behind Judy fell into the river. Her brother was gone!

C. There was no time to think. Judy jumped into the icy water and swam as fast as she could. Soon she reached her brother. The river tried to pull them under, but somehow Judy kept them floating.

1. Which part of the story should come first? A B C
2. Which part of the story should come second? A B C
3. Which part of the story should come last? A B C

> Comment: The words order, title, circle, and question may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus consists of three paragraphs that comprise the parts of a climactic narrative. The paragraphs are presented out of order, and the student identifies the correct order by answering the questions following the story.

The first paragraph of the story (B) introduces the characters and the problem. The middle paragraph (C) develops the problem, and the ending paragraph (A) provides a resolution to the problem. The story should be relatively simple: No more than two characters should be included, the conflict should be obvious (e.g., protagonist vs. nature), and "violations" of normal chronological order (e.g., flashbacks) should be avoided.

> Comments: Selected-response assessment of this skill places a great deal of emphasis on the student's reading ability. Thus constructed-response items would seem to be more appropriate. However, constructed-response assessment would entail the use of certain narrative writing skills that are not appropriate for this grade level (see Skills W4 GDe 2220 and 2230). Therefore, constructed-response items are not included here.
>
> This skill is partially assessed by one of the writing samples for fifth grade, which is described for Skill W5 DPpr 3000. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion for including a beginning, middle, and ending.

Skill: W3 GDe 1110

Skill Statement

Elaborates paragraphs: Adds details to a paragraph.

Skill Description

The student selects and adds appropriate details to a given paragraph. Students at this grade level may not be capable of generating their own topic sentences and supporting statements (see Skills W5 GDe 1140 and 1150), but they should recognize that a paragraph deals with a single topic and that the details in the paragraph must relate to that topic.

Assessment

Comments: Precise assessment of this skill must also consider the specific mode of discourse being produced. The appropriateness of the details added to a paragraph depends upon whether that paragraph is descriptive, narrative, expository, or persuasive. These distinctions are explained below.

(1) Descriptive details for this grade level include unique, salient, and evocative attributes (for further discussion, see Skill W3 GDe 2100: Elaborates for descriptive writing: Includes appropriate descriptive attributes).

(2) Narrative details for this grade level include significant events and appropriate conclusions for stories (see Skills W2 GDe 2210: Includes events appropriate for a straightline narrative, and W3 GDe 2240: Completes an open-ended story).

(3) Expository details comprise the factual content of a paragraph. At this grade level, such details include the what, when, and where information about an activitiy or event (see Skill W3 GDe 2311).

(4) Persuasive discourse is generally not taught until later grade levels. Therefore, adding details to persuasive paragraphs should not be assessed here (see Skill W6 GDe 2400: Elaborates for persuasive writing).

Because the selection and addition of appropriate details is so dependent upon the discourse mode, no separate assessment for this skill is included here. Specific assessment items can be found by referring to the discourse

W3 GDe 1110 (continued)

elaboration skills noted above. Moreover, the addition of relevant details to paragraphs is also considered in the scoring of the writing samples for this grade level (see Skills W3 DPpr 1000, 2000, and 6000).

Skill: W4 GDe 1120

Skill Statement

Elaborates paragraphs: Limits a paragraph to one main idea.

Skill Description

The student includes only one main idea in a paragraph; he/she is able to identify information that cannot be added to a paragraph because it does not relate to the main idea. This information may consist of irrelevant supporting statements or irrelevant supporting evidence for a supporting point; however, knowledge of this terminology is not prerequisite to this skill.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is best assessed by a writing sample. If this assessment is not feasible, a selected-response item may be used. Care must be taken that the item type used does not assess a reading rather than a writing skill as does one item type frequently included in assessment instruments for writing. This item type requires students to read a paragraph and then select a sentence that gives the main idea of the paragraph, thus assessing a receptive-language rather than a productive-language skill.

Sample Items

Directions: One sentence can be added to the paragraph because it fits the idea of the paragraph. Which sentence is it?

1. Football players must be strong to play in a game. They must be able to knock other players down. Players must be able to run fast because fast runners can carry the ball to make points in the game.

   A. Football players have to throw the ball hard.
   B. Football players wear shirts with numbers on them.
   C. Some football players go to school to learn to play ball.
   D. Basketball players run fast.

2. You must take good care of a pet bird. You must give it water to drink. Its cage must be kept clean so the bird will stay well. You can put paper in the bottom of the cage to make it easy to clean.

   A. The bird will get sick if it does not have water.
   B. Pet birds can sing sweetly.
   C. You can get a pet bird at a pet store.
   D. A pet rabbit may also live in a cage.

W4 GDe 1120 (continued)

3. The trunks of elephants are the strangest thing about these animals. Elephants use their trunks to pick up things. Food is one thing that elephants pick up with their trunks. They also use their trunks to splash water over themselves.

A. Elephants use their trunks to put food in their mouths.
B. Elephants have funny feet, too.
C. The ears of elephants have hair on them.
D. Pigs also look strange.

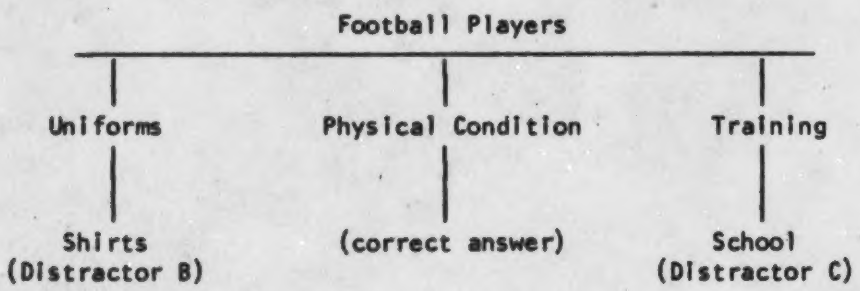
Item Description

The stimulus paragraph has an initial topic sentence that expresses the main idea. All other sentences pertain to the main idea stated in that topic sentence. At least two of these sentences should present supporting ideas and at least one sentence should state evidence for one of the supporting ideas. Longer paragraphs are desirable as examples of good writing, but would increase item difficulty. Main idea is most apparent in and pertinent to expository discourse. Therefore, the stimulus is written in expository discourse.

The student selects a sentence to add to a paragraph; the sentence fits the main idea. The correct answer should be either another supporting point or evidence for one of the supporting points in the stimulus. If the correct answer is evidence, it must pertain to any supporting points lacking supporting evidence in the stimulus unless all supporting points have such evidence.

Distractors are of two types:

(1) The distractor is a subordinate of a main idea that is coordinate to the main idea of the item stimulus, while the coordinates are subordinates of the same superordinate (all types B and C). The following diagram exemplifies this, utilizing content from item 1:



W4 GDe 1120 (continued)

(2) The distractor is a subordinate of a different superordinate from that to which the topic sentence applies (all type _D_'s).

This same item type can be revised slightly so that students select from four choices the only sentence that cannot be added to the paragraph because it does not pertain to the main idea. However, students could then answer the question correctly without reading the stimulus paragraph: They could simply choose the one distractor that pertained to content different from that of the other three choices. Therefore, this item type is not recommended for assessment.

Skill: W4 GDe 1130

Skill Statement

Elaborates paragraphs: Constructs introductory/beginning sentence for a paragraph.

Skill Description

The student constructs a beginning sentence for a paragraph; the sentence is complete and coherent. The sentence need not be a topic sentence (topic sentences are assessed at a higher grade level--see Skill W5 GDe 1140), but it must address the reader in a manner that suggests the communication of subsequent information.

Inclusion of a beginning/introductory sentence usually makes the paragraph easier to read and understand, and it enhances the interest and style of the paragraph.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W4 DPpr 1000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W5 GDe 1140

Skill Statement

Elaborates paragraphs: Uses a topic sentence for a paragraph.

Skill Description

The student uses a sentence that states the main idea of a paragraph. Other sentences in the paragraph elaborate on that single sentence; they can be subsumed under that sentence, given an outline form of the paragraph. Thus the scope of the sentence is broad enough to encompass all supporting sentences/ideas, yet specific enough to limit the paragraph to one main idea.

Knowledge of the term topic sentence is prerequisite to this skill.

Comments: Although topic-sentence use is common in much writing instruction, its actual value is in doubt. In "real world" writing (e.g., by professional writers), topic sentences actually appear to be uncommon.

Topic sentences are probably most common in persuasive and expository writing, less common in narrative and descriptive writing.

Assessment

Comments: The ideal assessment for use of a topic sentence is a writing sample. However, since topic sentences may be uncommon in writing (see Comments above), the lack of topic sentences in a writing sample may not necessarily be a negative feature of the sample.

Because constructed-response items (i.e., writing samples) may not elicit topic sentences, selected-response items are provided below. However, these items assess reading ability as well as writing ability. Thus they should be used with caution.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the paragraph. The topic sentence is missing from each paragraph. Which sentence would make the best topic sentence for the paragraph?

1. The cottonwood is one kind of tree that loses its leaves every winter. Birch trees also lose their leaves. The leaves on oak trees turn orange and yellow before they drop.

   A. Some kinds of trees lose their leaves each year.
   B. Oak leaves have unusual shapes.
   C. Pine trees keep their needles all winter.
   D. Trees look interesting in the winter.

2. A pet dog can be a lot of fun. Cats make good pets because they are clean. Some people even have pigs for pets because pigs are so smart. Other people like to keep birds because they sing so sweetly.

   A. Many different animals make good pets.
   B. A shepherd makes a good pet dog.
   C. You must take good care of pets.
   D. There are many animals in the world.

3. Some books teach you how to build things. Some books teach you to play games. Other books teach you about history. Books can even help you to understand school work like math. You can read story books for fun.

   A. You can read books for many reasons.
   B. Alice in Wonderland is a book you can read for fun.
   C. You can also read newspapers.
   D. Books are important.

Item Description

The stimulus is a paragraph without a topic sentence. The first line of the stimulus is indented so that it reflects the paragraph format. The paragraph has a minimum of three supporting sentences. All sentences in the stimulus relate to one relatively simple concept. Both the main idea, which is presented in the topic sentence, and the supporting ideas of the paragraph must be simple enough that the task does not require focusing on the content to understand the task. Neither should students need prior factual knowledge to comprehend the paragraph.

The student reads the stimulus paragraph and then, from the four possible choices, chooses the sentence that makes the best topic sentence for the paragraph. Since topic sentences are most relevant to expository writing, the item should be an example of expository prose.

The correct answer should be a sentence that encompasses all other sentences in the paragraph without introducing new ideas. Distractors

W5 GDe 1140 (continued)

should include sentences that (1) are too specific (e.g., the sentence relates to a specific supporting idea rather than to the general idea of the paragraph) (all choice B's), (2) present either new ideas that do not pertain to the content of the paragraph or additional supporting ideas (all choice C's), or (3) are too broad in scope and general in concept to be the topic sentence (all choice D's). The latter type of distractor is the most difficult because students may interpret a topic sentence as the broadest sentence and thus choose the wrong answer.

Skill: W5 GDe 1150

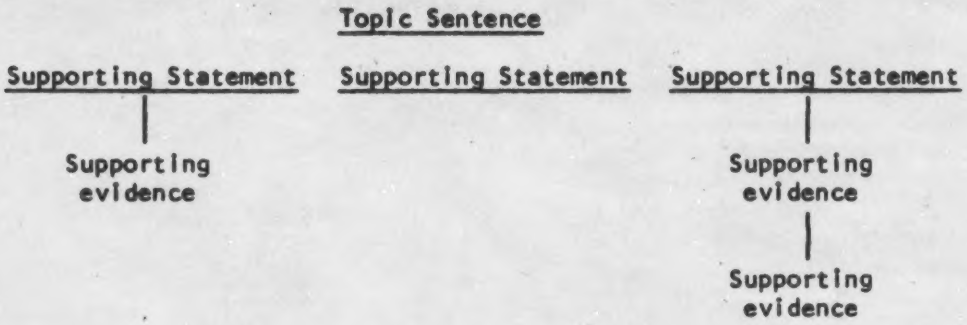
Skill Statement

Elaborates paragraphs: Uses supporting statements for a topic sentence.

Skill Description

The student supports a topic sentence by adding appropriate statements. These statements/sentences are limited to specifics that can be subsumed under the broader concept presented in the topic sentence.

The supporting statement may or may not require additional amplification/verification in the paragraph from other sentences that function as supporting evidence, as is suggested by the diagram below:



However, supporting evidence is not included for assessment in this skill.

Knowledge of the term topic sentence is prerequisite to this skill, but familiarity with the term supporting statement is not.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is indirectly assessed by the writing sample for Skill W5 DPpr 4000 at this grade level. Additionally, items for direct assessment of this skill are provided below.

Samples Items

Directions: Read the underlined topic sentence and the sentence that tells about it. Which sentence can be added to the paragraph because it also tells about the topic sentence?

1. Math is an important subject to study for four reasons. First, math helps people understand the new discoveries of science.

   A. People can keep track of their money if they know math.
   B. Learning a new language is exciting.
   C. People study many interesting subjects.
   D. It is good to study math.
   (Alternate: I passed a math test the other day.)

W5 GDe 1150 (continued)

2. There are a few important safety rules for swimming. The most important one is that you should always swim where there is someone who can come to your aid.

A. Wait at least an hour after eating before going swimming again.
B. Some people like to lie out in the sun and relax.
C. There are good safety rules for every sport.
D. Observe swimming rules at all times.
(Alternate: Swimming has always been my favorite exercise.)

3. Many different kinds of materials can be used in an art class. Paints and paper are some of the usual materials used.

A. Clay, beads, and cardboard are good art materials.
B. It takes hours of practice to become a good musician.
C. Some school subjects make use of special materials in the classroom.
D. There are many different art materials to choose from.
(Alternate: Pat once tried to paint a picture in art class.)

Item Description

The stimulus includes a topic sentence and one supporting sentence. The topic sentence clearly defines the main idea of a potential paragraph. The supporting sentence expands on the topic sentence, suggesting the direction of the paragraph's theme. This directional sentence is necessary to assure that students understand the focus of the topic sentence.

The student reads the topic sentence and the supporting sentence in the stimulus. Then he/she selects from four choices the sentence that is a supporting statement for the topic sentence.

The item type is amenable to a number of appropriate distractors. One type consists of a sentence that is not support because it refers to a different concept (all choice B's); this is the easiest distractor type. A second distractor pattern refers to a concept that is broader than, or superordinate to, the concept of the topic sentence (all choice C's). Another distractor type restates the topic sentence (all choice D's). An additional distractor type may be used alternately with those described above, but its development must be carefully monitored because it is difficult. This distractor consists of a sentence that refers generally to part of the topic of the paragraph, but it is essentially a digressive narrative element

W5 GDe 1150 (continued)

rather than a supporting statement (all Alternates). This kind of distractor is typical of errors in students' writing because of classroom emphasis on "story" writing.

The syntax of the correct answer may seem slightly unnatural because coherence devices are not included since they provide clues to the correct answer.

Skill: W3 GDe 1200

Skill Statement

Writes titles.

Skill Description

The student writes a title for a composition. In textbook practice, title-writing is frequently applied to narrative discourse, but this skill may pertain to any discourse type.

Titles need to be descriptive of the piece of writing; they give the general idea of what the writer is saying in the composition. They should be no broader than the topic (e.g., not "Fish" when the topic is "Trout"), nor should they be only a part of the topic (e.g., "The Inside of a Pencil Sharpener" for a composition on how a pencil sharpener works). They should be precise, not vague (e.g., not "How a Machine Works" for the pencil sharpener composition); they should relate to the topic (e.g., not "How to Catch Fish" when the composition is a description of a trout). In addition, titles may serve to attract attention, although this aspect cannot be easily evaluated.

Title-writing is sometimes tested by having students supply or choose a title for a given composition; this is appropriate so long as the distractors are varied according to the dimensions suggested above. However, care must be taken so that the item does not merely become a test of reading for the main idea; this can be accomplished by making the item very easy to read and by making the topic explicit within the composition.

Comment: The LSF does not include format skills for titles; e.g., capitalization, placement.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W3 DPpr 2000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W6 GDe 1300

Skill Statement

Uses connotative language to affect audience.

Skill Description

The student uses connotative language to affect the audience by the tone or implications of that language. This entails the selection of words with negative/positive connotations over their synonyms that do not create the desired effect. Thus Skill W3 Ld 2000, "Uses synonyms and antonyms," is prerequisite to this skill.

Connotative terms have affective implications beyond their denotative meanings; e.g., in descriptive or narrative writing the term shack might be used rather than house to create a negative picture/impression for the audience; in persuasive writing the term politician might be used rather than public servant to influence the audience toward a negative view of the referent for the term. (Expository writing is characterized by denotative rather than connotative language to create a matter-of-fact tone.)

Some textbooks use the term connotation in providing instruction on this skill. Other textbooks refer to it variously as loaded words, as favorable, unfavorable, and neutral words, or as smear words. Although connotative language is relevant to descriptive and narrative writing, instruction in textbooks generally focuses on its use in persuasive writing through language used for newspaper and television editorials and advertisements/commercials.

Assessment

Comment: Although instruction refers to the importance of connotation in writing, practice generally focuses on items (1) that have the student choose between terms/sentences with positive and negative connotation or (2) that have him/her change the positive/negative words in a passage or paragraph to negative/positive words. Correspondingly, this skill is assessed directly by items for the skill in isolation rather than by the writing sample for persuasive discourse, Skill W6 DPpr 5000.

Sample Items

Directions: Rewrite each sentence by changing the underlined words to language that will make readers have a bad opinion of the person you are writing about.

1. Jim is a true leader.
2. Mary usually behaves intelligently.
3. Pam always eats quickly.

Directions: Answer the questions below.

1. Which sentence would you write to make your reader have a bad opinion of Jim?

   A. Jim is a bossy kid.
   B. Jim is a true leader.
   C. Jim usually knows what to do.

2. Which sentence would you write to make your reader have a good opinion of Mary?

   A. Mary usually behaves intelligently.
   B. Mary likes to show off her brains.
   C. Mary is such a bookworm.

3. Which sentence would you use to make your reader have a bad opinion of Pam?

   A. Pam always gobbles her food.
   B. Pam does not waste time by eating slowly.
   C. Pam always eats quickly.

Item Description

The stimulus for items 1-3 is a sentence containing underlined words that either have positive connotations or are neutral in affective tone. Negative stimuli are not used because the revisions to "good opinion" require more subtle discrimination and may involve arbitrary value judgments. The student rewrites the sentence, changing the underlined words to language that has negative connotations. This constructed-response task is the preferred item type for assessing this skill.

If constructed-response assessment is not feasible, the selected-response format (items 4-6) should be administered. For these items, the student selects from three choices the sentence that effects the "opinion" elicited by the question. The question asks for a sentence with either positive or negative connotation.

One distractor conveys an impression opposite to that created by the correct answer (all type B's). Another distractor reflects either the same incorrect alternative as the type B distractor or a neutral (i.e., non-connotative) impression (all type C's). This second distractor type is variable because constructing an appropriate neutral distractor is not always possible. This is true particularly for the items eliciting positive-impression sentences because neutral statements frequently may be perceived as positive statements by the students.

Skill: W6 GDe 1400

Skill Statement

Uses appropriate formal/informal language.

Skill Description

When writing, the student uses formal or informal language in the appropriate situation. Use of formal and informal language is primarily an audience consideration. When the audience is well known to the writer, informal language is appropriate. When the audience is not (well) known by the writer, formal language is more appropriate. Status/age is also involved: Peers and those younger or of lower status may be addressed informally; those older or of higher status are addressed formally.

At the elementary level, the formal/informal distinction is probably most pronounced in letter writing: business letters are formal; personal letters are informal. Even the formats for the two kinds of letters differ to indicate this distinction.

Although the formal/informal distinction is critical to quality writing, it is difficult to define and thus to assess. Informal writing frequently includes contractions and slang. Formal writing frequently includes technical words and other polysyllabic words of Romance origin. Informal language tends to be more direct, while formal language may use terminology with less bold connotations (e.g., lie vs. prevaricate). However, more extensive definitions of the precise forms of formal and informal language are difficult; this is probably the reason that the topic receives only moderate instructional coverage.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: One word in the sentence is too informal for most letters. Cross out the informal word and write a word that you would use if you wrote the sentence in a letter to someone that you have never met.

1. A new bunch of students will be coming to our school.
2. We think you are doing a swell job.
3. I need your help with a tough problem.

Directions: One word in the sentence is too informal for most letters. Which word should you replace with a more formal word if you wrote the sentence in a letter to someone that you have never met?

4. A new bunch of students will be coming to our school.

   A. bunch
   B. students
   C. new
   D. coming

5. We think you are doing a swell job.

   A. swell
   B. think
   C. doing
   D. job

6. I need your help with a tough problem.

   A. tough
   B. need
   C. help
   D. problem.

Directions: The underlined word is too informal for most letters. Which word should you use if you wrote the sentence in a letter to someone that you have never met?

7. A new bunch of students will be coming to our school.

   A. group
   B. crowd
   C. gang

8. We think you are doing a swell job.

   A. fine
   B. snappy
   C. super

9. I need your help with a tough problem.

   A. difficult
   B. sticky
   C. rough

Comment: The words formal and informal may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus for both the constructed-response items (items 1-3) and the selected-response items (items 4-9) is a sentence containing a word that is too informal for impersonal correspondence.

For items 1-3, the student must locate the informal word, cross it out, and generate a more appropriate word to replace it. Allowance must be made for different, but acceptable responses. For example, the informal word swell could be appropriately replaced by words such as fine, good, wonderful, outstanding, etc. Inappropriate responses for swell would include informal synonyms such as great, terrific, neat, super, etc. This criterion must be applied to all items in the constructed-response assessment.

Items 4-6 are selected-response items that assess the student's ability to locate the informal word from four choices. In addition to the correct answer (all A's), three words from the sentence are employed as distractors. Each distractor is a word that could be replaced by a synonym. Distractors must be words that are commonly employed in the formal writing of students at this grade level.

In items 7-9, the informal word is underlined in the stimulus sentence. The student selects a more formal synonym for the target word from three choices (only two distractors are employed due to the lack of appropriate synonyms at this level). The correct answer (all A's) must be an unambiguously formal synonym for the informal term. Both distractors are slang words that are synonyms for the target word and are common to the informal speech of students.

Since the constructed-response task more nearly parallels self-generated proofing and editing, it is the preferred mode of assessment.

Skill: W6 GDe 1500

Skill Statement

Summarizes information.

Skill Description

In order to maintain unity and clarity in written discourse, the student summarizes important information. A summary is often included in the closing paragraph of an essay (see Skill W6 GDpo 7000: Uses beginning, body, and end paragraphs). In this case, the student summarizes the ideas which he/she has discussed in the preceding text. In addition, students are often required to summarize information from other sources (e.g., encyclopedia articles). Summaries are generally more relevant to expository, persuasive, and narrative discourse than to descriptive discourse.

> Comment: Although this skill is frequently mentioned in state competency lists, most textbooks do not include specific instruction on writing summaries, although they imply that this skill is part of assigned "research" papers.

Written summaries are characterized by the following features:

(1) The summary includes all of the main ideas of the summarized text.

(2) The summary presents the main ideas in the same order as they are presented in the text.

(3) The summary includes only main points and omits supporting statements and explanations.

Two important sub-skills are prerequisite to summary writing:

(1) The student must be able to identify the main topics in paragraphs of connected text (see Fiege-Kollmann, 1979). Although this is essentially a reading skill, students cannot be expected to write summaries unless they can identify the main ideas in the text that they are summarizing.

(2) The student must be able to paraphrase main ideas. A summary usually includes a restatement of the main ideas rather than a verbatim transcription of the ideas as they originally appeared.

> Comment: Paraphrasing at this grade level may be very minimal; i.e., the paraphrased statement may differ only slightly from the original statement; e.g.:
>
> George Washington commanded the Continental Army. →
>
> Washington led the Continental Army.

> Other more sophisticated paraphrasing techniques (e.g., passivization, nominalization) should not be expected of elementary students.

Because the ability to summarize information is so dependent upon the student's reading comprehension skills, assessment of summary writing will naturally reflect this dependence. Although such emphasis on reading ability is ordinarily not desirable when assessing writing skills, it is unavoidable here.

Assessment

Comment: Ideally, a constructed-response task should be used; one is presented first below. However, because of the time required to assess and score constructed-response tasks, it may be preferable to use selected-response tasks; they are presented last.

(1) Constructed-response task

Sample Item

Directions: Read the title and the essay. Watch for the main ideas.

Swimming Safety

Swimming can be a lot of fun, but swimmers should always remember a few safety rules. First, you should never swim alone. If something happens to you while you are in the water, it is important to have someone nearby to help you.

You should also be careful about where you go swimming. Never dive into the water unless you know how deep it is. It is also a good idea to swim only where there is a lifeguard present.

Another important safety tip is to wait one hour after eating before you go swimming. Swimming right after eating can cause cramps. If you get cramps while you are in the water, you might drown.

Directions: Write a paragraph that is a summary of this essay. Write the paragraph in your own words. Be sure that your sentences are different from the sentences in the essay.

- Be sure to include all the main ideas from the essay.
- Be sure to include only the main ideas. Leave out the supporting details.

- Put the main ideas in the same order as they are in the essay.

- Be sure to write complete sentences.

Comment: The words summary and essay may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The writing stimulus is an expository essay of three paragraphs. Three main ideas are explicitly stated in the essay: (1) never swim alone, (2) be careful where you swim, and (3) don't swim immediately after eating. The student is directed to write a summary of the essay, without copying directly from the essay. The specific prompts are included in the directions (1) to clearly define the writing task, and (2) to facilitate the construction of an appropriate scoring key for evaluating the summary.

Scoring Key

The skills array of the key's matrix consists of the features of good writing that are effected when students employ the skills appropriate at this grade level for this writing task. The skills corresponding to each criterion are listed by framework number on the subsequent scoring guide. Performance ratings of good, acceptable, and unacceptable are given on each criterion in accordance with the rating considerations that the scoring guide describes. Thus the scoring key can be used to determine a total writing score by assigning numerical equivalents to the good/acceptable/unacceptable scores. It can also be used to elicit diagnostic information about individual component skills.

Scoring Criteria	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
CONTENT:			
Includes all main ideas.			
Includes main ideas in the same order as in the essay.			
Omits supporting details.			
Paraphrases main ideas.			

Scoring Criteria	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
FORM:			
Uses correct grammar and complete sentences.	____	____	____
Capitalizes and punctuates correctly.	____	____	____
Spells correctly.	____	____	____
Writes legibly, with appropriate margins and indentation.	____	____	____

Scoring Guide

The scoring guide describes the guidelines for determining what constitutes a good, acceptable, and unacceptable score on each criterion in the scoring key.

The skills corresponding to the criteria are listed by framework number within the brackets that follow each criterion statement. The scoring guide references only those skills that (1) must be employed to produce the writing sample and (2) are specified for assessment at the immediate and earlier grade levels.

CONTENT:

Includes all main ideas (i.e., (1) never swim alone, (2) be careful where you swim, and (3) don't swim immediately after eating).

Good: All three main ideas are included.

Acceptable: Two main ideas are included.

Unacceptable: One or no main idea is included.

Includes main ideas in the same order as in the essay (see order listed for criterion above).

Good: Three main ideas are in the correct order.

Acceptable: Two main ideas are in the correct order.

Unacceptable: One or no main idea is in the correct order.

Omits supporting details.

Good:	No supporting details are included.
Acceptable:	A few supporting details are included (e.g., "Cramps can make you drown").
Unacceptable:	Many supporting details are included.

Paraphrases main ideas from the essay.

Good:	Most sentences are expressed in the student's own words.
Acceptable:	Some sentences/phrases are copied from the stimulus.
Unacceptable:	Most sentences/phrases are copied from the stimulus.

FORM:

Uses correct grammar and complete sentences. [Skills Lu 3000, 4000, 7000, 8000; Lgk 4000, 5000; Lsp 1000]

Good:	The paragraph has few or no grammatical errors and all sentences are complete.
Acceptable:	The paragraph has some grammatical errors and most sentences are complete.
Unacceptable:	The paragraph has many grammatical errors and many sentences are fragments and/or run-ons.

Capitalizes and punctuates correctly. [Skills Mc 1000; Mp 1000]

Good:	The paragraph has few or no errors.
Acceptable:	The paragraph has some errors.
Unacceptable:	The paragraph has many errors.

Spells correctly. [Skills Sc 1000, Sv 1000; Sa 1000, 2000, 3000]

Good:	Most words are correctly spelled.
Acceptable:	Several different words are misspelled.
Unacceptable:	Many different words are misspelled.

> Comment: The acceptable and unacceptable ratings for the "Spells correctly" criterion refer to "different words" because many instances of misspelling the same word should be evaluated as one misspelled word.

Writes legibly, with appropriate margins and indentation.
[Skills Mcf 4000, Mfs 1000, 2000]

Good:	The paragraph has few or no exceptions to the criterion.
Acceptable:	The paragraph has some exceptions to the criterion.
Unacceptable:	The paragraph has many exceptions to the criterion.

(2) Selected-response task

Sample Item

Directions: Read the title and the essay. Watch for the main ideas.

Swimming Safety

(see stimulus for constructed-response task)

Now read these paragraphs. They are summaries of the essay. Which sentence best describes the paragraphs?

1. Swimming safety rules are easy to remember. First, always swim with someone else. Next, be very careful where you swim. And last, never go swimming right after you eat.

A. The paragraph has all the main ideas in the right order.
B. The paragraph has all the main ideas, but they are not in the right order.
C. The paragraph does not have all the main ideas.

2. Swimming safety rules are easy to remember. First, be very careful where you swim. Next, always swim with someone else. And last, never go swimming right after you eat.

A. The paragraph has all the main ideas in the right order.
B. The paragraph has all the main ideas, but they are not in the right order.
C. The paragraph does not have all the main ideas.

3. Swimming safety rules are easy to remember. First, always swim with someone else. Next, be very careful where you swim. And last, don't dive in the water if you don't know how deep it is.

W6 GDe 1500 (continued)

A. The paragraph has all the main ideas in the right order.
B. The paragraph has all the main ideas, but they are not in the right order.
C. The paragraph does not have all the main ideas.

Item Description

The stimulus is an expository essay of three paragraphs. The same essay is used as the stimulus for all three items in order to minimize the reading task. Three main ideas are explicitly stated in the essay: (1) never swim alone, (2) be careful where you swim, and (3) don't swim immediately after eating. One correct summary paragraph (item 1) contains all the main ideas of the essay in the correct order. One incorrect summary (item 2) contains all the main ideas, but they are not in the same order as they are in the essay. The other incorrect summary (item 3) contains only two main ideas and one supporting detail (i.e., don't dive in unfamiliar water). The student is required to select the sentence that describes the summary paragraph's relation to the essay.

> Comment: A fourth incorrect summary could be constructed: The paragraph has all the main ideas in the right order, but it also includes extraneous supporting details. However, since this form is a combination of the two assessed forms and since considerable processing is required to identify extraneous details, this incorrect form is not included here.

Skill: W6 GDe 1600

Skill Statement

Constructs a composition from a topic outline.

Skill Description

Given a topic outline (see Skill W6 GDpo 3000), the student constructs a composition that follows the outline. The outline may suggest any discourse mode or form (except poetry). The composition must include all the outline content in the order given. The outline topics must be reconstructed as complete sentences and must be connected with appropriate transitional expressions (cf. Skill W5 Lt 1000).

Assessment

Comment: Ideally, a constructed-response task should be used; one is presented first below. However, because of the time required to assess and score constructed-response tasks, it may be preferable to use selected-response tasks; they are presented last.

(1) Constructed-response task

Sample Item

Directions: Study the outline. Then write a paragraph based on the outline. Be sure to include all of the outline ideas in the order of the outline. Be sure to write complete sentences. You will need to add many words to write a good paragraph.

Milk Products

I. Liquid
    A. Cream
    B. Buttermilk
II. Solid
    A. Cheese
    B. Butter

Item Description

The writing stimulus is an outline containing a title, two main topics, and two to three subtopics for each main topic. The content covered by the outline should be within the students experience so that they can be expected to write from it.

Scoring Key

The skills array of the key's matrix consists of the features of good writing that are effected when students employ the skills appropriate at this grade level for this writing task. The skills corresponding to each criterion are listed by framework number on the subsequent scoring guide. Performance ratings of good, acceptable, or unacceptable are given on each criterion in accordance with the rating considerations that the scoring guide describes. Thus the scoring key can be used to determine a total writing score by assigning numerical equivalents to the good/acceptable/unacceptable scores. It can also be used to elicit diagnostic information about individual component skills.

Scoring Criteria	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
CONTENT:			
Includes all the information in the outline	____	____	____
Includes the information in the same order as in the outline.	____	____	____
Uses appropriate transitional expressions.	____	____	____
FORM:			
Uses correct grammar and complete sentences.	____	____	____
Capitalizes and punctuates correctly.	____	____	____
Spells correctly.	____	____	____
Writes legibly, with appropriate margins and indentation.	____	____	____

Scoring Guide

The scoring guide describes the guidelines for determining what constitutes a good, acceptable, or unacceptable score on each criterion in the scoring key.

The skills corresponding to the criteria are listed by framework number within the brackets that follow each criterion statement. The scoring guide references only those skills that (1) must be employed to produce the writing sample and (2) are designated as optimal assessment skills at the immediate and earlier grade levels.

CONTENT

Includes all the information in the outline.

Good:	All of the main topics and all of the subtopics are mentioned in the paragraph.
Acceptable:	All of the main topics are mentioned in the paragraph, but one or two of the subtopics are omitted.
Unacceptable:	Most of the topics are not mentioned in the paragraph.

Includes the information in the same order as in the outline.

Good:	The order of the outline is followed exactly in the paragraph.
Acceptable:	The order of the outline is generally followed in the paragraph.
Unacceptable:	The order of the outline is not followed in the paragraph.

Uses appropriate transitional expressions. [Skill W5 Lt 1000]

Good:	Some transitional expressions are included.
Acceptable:	A few transitional expressions are included.
Unacceptable:	No transitional expressions are included.

FORM

Uses correct grammar and complete sentences. [Skill Lu 3000, 4000, 7000, 8000; Lgk 4000, 5000; Lsp 1000]

Good:	The paragraph has few or no grammatical errors and all sentences are complete.
Acceptable:	The paragraph has some grammatical errors and most sentences are complete.
Unacceptable:	The paragraph has many grammatical errors and many sentences are fragments and/or run-ons.

Capitalizes and punctuates correctly. [Skills Mc 1000; Mp 1100]

Good:	The paragraph has few or no errors.
Acceptable:	The paragraph has some errors.
Unacceptable:	The paragraph has many errors.

Spells correctly. [Skills Sc 1000, Sv 1000; Sa 1000, 2000, 3000]

Good: Most words are correctly spelled.

Acceptable: Several different words are misspelled.

Unacceptable: Many different words are misspelled.

Comment: The ratings refer to "different words" because many instances of misspelling the same word should be evaluated as one misspelled word.

Writes legibly, with appropriate margins and indentation. [Skills Hcf 4000, Mfs 1000, 2000]

Good: The paragraph has few or no exceptions to the criterion.

Acceptable: The paragraph has some exceptions to the criterion.

Unacceptable: The paragraph has many exceptions to the criterion.

(2) Selected-response task

Sample Items

Directions: Study the outline. Then read each of the paragraphs. They were written from the outline. Which sentence best describes each paragraph?

Milk Products

I. Liquid
  A. Cream
  B. Buttermilk
II. Solid
  A. Cheese
  B. Butter

1. Milk Products

There are many products made from milk. Some milk products are liquids. Cream is a liquid that is part of milk. Buttermilk is also a liquid. Some milk products are solids. Cheese is a solid that is made from milk. Butter is another solid product that is made from milk.

A. The paragraph matches the outline exactly.
B. The paragraph does not have all the information from the outline.
C. The paragraph has all the information from the outline, but it is not in the right order.

2. Milk Products

There are many products made from milk. Some milk products are liquids. Cream is a liquid that is part of milk. Buttermilk is also a liquid. Some milk products are solids. Cheese is a solid that is made from milk.

A. The paragraph matches the outline exactly.
B. The paragraph does not have all the information from the outline.
C. The paragraph has all the information from the outline, but it is not in the right order.

3. Milk Products

There are many products made from milk. Some milk products are solids. Cheese is a solid that is made from milk. Butter is another solid product that is made from milk. Some milk products are liquids. Cream is a liquid that is part of milk. Buttermilk is also a liquid.

A. The paragraph matches the outline exactly.
B. The paragraph does not have all the information from the outline.
C. The paragraph has all the information from the outline, but it is not in the right order.

Item Description

The stimulus is an outline consisting of a title, two main topics, and two to three subtopics for each main topic. One correct paragraph (item 1) is written that contains all of the information in the outline in the order given. At least one incorrect paragraph (item 2) is missing a subtopic from the outline, but otherwise has the same ordering and wording (insofar as possible) as the correct paragraph. At least one incorrect paragraph (item 3) includes all the information from the outline and is worded the same (insofar as possible) as the correct paragraph; however, the topics are not in the order of the outline. Incorrect order can be created by reversing the main topics and their related subtopics (as in the example) or by reversing subtopics, the latter being more subtle and thus more difficult.

W6 GDe 1600 (continued)

The student is required to select the sentence that describes the paragraph's relation to the outline.

Comment: A fourth incorrect paragraph could be constructed: The paragraph does not have all the information from the outline, and the information is not in the right order. However, since this form is a combination of the two assessed forms and since considerable processing (and time) is required to analyze a paragraph for the lack of two features, it is not included for assessment.

Skill: W6 GDe 1700

Skill Statement

Constructs a bibliography.

Skill Description

When preparing a research report, the student writes a bibliography that lists the sources used in preparing the report. At this grade level, three kinds of sources are generally used: books, magazines, and encyclopedias.

The major concern in bibliography construction is generally the mechanics of ordering, punctuating, and capitalizing the appropriate information. Textbooks and teachers vary in the information required in a bibliography. The following critical information must always be included; the less critical information is not always required.

Books.

Critical: author: last name first
title: underlined, "important words"* capitalized
Less critical: date of publication, specific pages consulted
Example: Orsteen, Phyllis, Bears Around the World, 1966

Comment: The name and the location of the publisher are required in most adult bibliographies. However, this information is not required at the elementary level.

Magazines.

Critical: author: last name first
title of article: in quotation marks, "important words"* capitalized
title of magazine: underlined, "important words"* capitalized
date: usually month and year
Less critical: page numbers of article
Example: Knapp, John, "Measuring Up," Cricket, July 1979, pages 22-24

Encyclopedias.

Critical: name of encyclopedia: underlined, capitalized
name of article: in quotation marks, capitalized
volume: "Volume" or "Vol." plus number
Less critical: date of publication, specific pages of article
Example: World Book Encyclopedia, "Phonograph," Volume 15, 1979, pages 359-363

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*Instruction often calls for capitalization of "important words." Formally, they include the first word and words other than articles, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions.

Bibliographic information is generally listed in the order given above, with commas between each piece of information. At this level, a period may or may not follow the last piece of information. References are alphabetically ordered by the first word of the entry (author of book/article or title of encyclopedia).

Assessment

(1) Constructed-response task

Sample Items

Directions: Use the three entries to write a bibliography for a report. The names of books, encyclopedias, magazines, and articles are not written in correct form. Use the rules for punctuation and capitalization and put the entries in correct order.

1. A book titled THE FIRST BOOK OF THE VIKINGS. It was written by Louise Rich and published in 1962.

   The article titled VIKINGS in the WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA that was published in 1979. This section is in Volume 20. It begins on page 294 and ends on page 297.

   A magazine article titled THE VIKING DISCOVERY OF AMERICA. It is found in CRICKET and appeared in August of 1978. The author is Susan Eberly. Pages 48-52.

2. An article titled PLANET in Volume 15 of WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA, published in 1979. The article begins on page 466 and ends on page 468.

   A magazine article on pages 23 to 31 of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. The name of the article is THE SOLAR SYSTEM. The author is Carl Sagan and it was published in September of 1975.

   A book by Patrick Moore titled THE PLANETS. It was published in 1962.

3. A magazine article by William Allard titled CHIEF JOSEPH. It appeared in March of 1977 in NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC. It starts on page 409 and ends on 434.

   An article titled INDIAN WARS in the WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA. It is found on pages 144 to 149 of Volume 10. It was published in 1979.

   A book titled A HISTORY OF THE INDIANS OF THE UNITED STATES. It was written by Angie Debo and published in 1970.

(2) Selected-response tasks

Directions: Which entry is correct for a bibliography?

4. A. Rich, Louise, The First Book of the Vikings, 1962
   B. Louise Rich, The First Book of the Vikings, 1962
   C. The First Book of the Vikings, Rich, Louise, 1962
   D. The First Book of the Vikings, Louise Rich, 1962

5. A. Allard, William, "Chief Joseph," National Geographic, March 1977, pages 409-434
   B. William Allard, National Geographic, "Chief Joseph," pages 409-434, March 1977
   C. "Chief Joseph," National Geographic, March 1977, William Allard, pages 409-434
   D. National Geographic, pages 409-434, March 1977, "Chief Joseph," Allard, William

6. A. World Book Encyclopedia, "Planet," Volume 15, 1979, pages 466-468
   B. "Planet," World Book Encyclopedia, Volume 15, 1979, pages 466-468
   C. World Book Encyclopedia, "Planet," pages 466-468, Volume 15, 1979
   D. "Planet," pages 466-468, World Book Encyclopedia, Volume 15, 1979

Directions: These entries are not in the correct alphabetical order. Which order is correct?

7. I. Rich, Louise, The First Book of the Vikings, 1962
   II. Eberly, Susan, "The Viking Discovery of America," Cricket, August 1978, pages 48-52
   III. World Book Encyclopedia, "Vikings," Volume 20, 1979, pages 294-297

   A. II, I, III
   B. III, II, I
   C. I, III, II
   D. II, III, I

8. I. Sagan, Carl, "The Solar System," Scientific American, September 1975, pages 23-31
   II. World Book Encyclopedia, "Planet," Volume 15, 1979, pages 466-468
   III. Moore, Patrick, The Planets, 1962

   A. III, I, II
   B. II, III, I
   C. I, III, II
   D. III, II, I

9. I. Allard, William, "Chief Joseph," National Geographic, March 1977, pages 409-434
   II. World Book Encyclopedia, "Indian Wars," Volume 10, 1979, pages 144-149
   III. Debo, Angie, A History of the Indians of the United States, 1970

   A. I, III, II
   B. III, I, II
   C. II, I, III
   D. III, II, I

Item Description

Items 1-3 are constructed-response items for which the student must construct a bibliography from three separate sources (i.e., book, magazine article, and encyclopedia article). The student is given the necessary bibliographic information for each source in a short paragraph. The information is randomly ordered. The title of the book, magazine, or encyclopedia, and the titles of all articles are presented in all capital letters so that the student may generate proper capitalization. No information other than that required for a correct elementary bibliography is given. The paragraphs are placed in random order so that the student may generate the correct alphabetical order for the listings. The student must place the information for each source in the correct order, observe bibliographic rules for punctuation and capitalization, and list the sources in alphabetical order.

Scoring Key for Teacher Use

The skills array of the key's matrix consists of the features required to construct an acceptable bibliography. Performance ratings of good, acceptable, or unacceptable are given on each criterion in accordance with the rating considerations that the scoring guide describes. Thus the scoring key can be used to determine a total score by assigning numerical equivalents to the good/acceptable/unacceptable scores. It can also be used to elicit diagnostic information about individual component skills.

Scoring Criteria	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Lists sources in alphabetical order.	____		____
Places critical information in correct order.	____	____	____
Capitalizes appropriate information.	____	____	____
Uses appropriate punctuation.	____	____	____

Comment: The "Lists sources in alphabetical order" criterion has only good and unacceptable ratings because a student either does or does not list the sources in alphabetical order.

Scoring Guide

The scoring guide describes the guidelines for determining what constitutes a good, acceptable, or unacceptable score on each criterion in the scoring key.

Lists sources in alphabetical order.

Good: All three sources are in correct alphabetical order.

Unacceptable: Not all sources are in correct alphabetical order.

Places critical information in correct order.

Good: Most critical information is placed in correct order.

Acceptable: Several items are not placed in correct order.

Unacceptable: Most items are not placed in correct order.

Capitalizes appropriate information.

Good: Capitalizes the first letter in all or most proper nouns and in all or most "important words" (see footnote in Skill Description).

Acceptable: There are several errors in capitalization.

Unacceptable: There are many errors in capitalization.

Uses appropriate punctuation.

Good: Commas, quotation marks, and the underlining of book titles and encyclopedias are employed with few or no errors.

Acceptable: There are several errors in punctuation.

Unacceptable: There are many errors in punctuation.

Items 4-6 are selected-response items for which the student must select the one entry that displays proper bibliographic form for a single source. All choices are correctly punctuated and capitalized, differing only in the order that information is given. Choice A is the correct answer in all items. Distractors will vary according to the nature of the source. In item 4, choice B differs from the correct answer in giving the author's first name first; choice C differs from A in listing the name of the book first; choice D also lists the book first and then reverses the name of the author.

Distractors for item 5 include reversing the name of the author (choice B), placing the name of the article first (choice C), and placing the name of the magazine first (choice D). In item 6, the distractors include placing the name of the article first (choice B), reversing volume number and page numbers (choice C), and placing the page numbers after the name of the article and before the name of the encyclopedia.

Items 7-9 are selected-response items for which the student must choose the correct alphabetical order (all A's) for three entries. The student is presented with three entries (labeled I, II, and III to avoid confusion with the answer choices) that have been placed in an incorrect alphabetical order. The student must then select the correct order from four choices. The distractors for this item are three incorrectly ordered series of the symbols used for the entries.

Since the constructed-response assessment (items 1-3) more closely resembles the actual construction of a bibliography, it is the preferred mode of assessment. The selected-response assessments (items 4-9) focus on subskills that are important to the final task and may be emphasized at appropriate stages in the learning process.

Skill: W3 GDe 2100

Skill Statement

Elaborates for descriptive writing: Includes appropriate descriptive attributes.

Skill Description

In a description, the student includes attributes that best convey the images of the entity, object, or sensory experience (e./o./s.e.) to be described. [Other types of elaborating--producing discourse that conveys organized ideas--that are appropriate for this grade level are included as content skills treated in the writing sample, Skill W3 DPpr 1000.] The attributes selected should consist of the following types:

1. Unique attributes--attributes that distinguish the e./o./s.e. from any other e./o./s.e. This attribute type involves a differentiating process: The e./o./s.e. is identified as different from the rest of the classification by this uniqueness (e.g., a dachsund's body shape is unique; thus the attribute differentiates it from other dogs in the class of dogs).

2. Salient attributes--attributes that would immediately catch the eye of the viewer because of their "visibility" (e.g., a person's hair color is a salient attribute in a contrast, for example, to his/her index finger). This attribute type is more important for "realistic" description, the purpose of which is to convey an objective picture; it is less important to artistic description, the purpose of which is to recreate the author's subjective impression of the e./o./s.e.

3. Evocative attributes--attributes that stimulate memories of a familiar sensory experience. This attribute type entails a type of classification process: The e./o./s.e. is placed in a particular class so that a particular attribute is associated with it (e.g., the sharp edge of an e./o./s.e. is evoked by classifying it with knives). This attribute may sometimes occur in simile structure (see Skill W4 Lt 2100).

This skill relates to Skills W3 Ld 1000 and 4000

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W3 DPpr 1000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion for describing the object of the stimulus: The student must select attributes to describe the object; e.g., the student must select an attribute of the hot dog's appearance to "describe how a hot dog looks."

Skill: W2 GDe 2210

Skill Statement

Elaborates for narrative writing: Includes events appropriate for a straightline narrative.

Skill Description

The student includes events, incidents, happenings that comprise content that is appropriate for a straightline narrative. (A narrative presents an experience to an audience, giving the impression of passage in time. A straightline narrative is a narrative such as an autobiography, which conveys events chronologically; it does not entail the selecting and organizing of events to build toward a climax as does a climactic narrative.)

The events must be those that are the most significant to include in an account of a specified length (i.e., racing to catch the bus for school has more significance to a narrative account about one day in a student's life than does the tying of a shoelace).

The events are conveyed to the reader, giving a clear picture of the activity occurring in time.

Comment: This is an important subskill of narrative writing. Although this skill may not always be listed separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, a student cannot write a straightline narrative without employing this skill.

Assessment

Comments: This skill is partially assessed by the writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W2 DPpr 2000. See those specifications for the sample item and item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criteria for writing sentences about the pictures.

The necessity for providing specific scoring guidelines requires a stimulus that can be described in those guidelines. Thus pictures must be used at this grade level to cue student writing while limiting the range of possible response to be accounted for in the guidelines. The pictures minimize the student's task of "selecting events." Teachers who wish to develop their own scoring guidelines may assess this skill by asking students to write a story about an activity that will elicit straightline narrative skills. (A class field trip is an example of such an activity.) The selected-response items below provide another option.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the story title and the sentences. Which sentence would best fit in the story?

1. A PONY RIDE

   A. Lisa got on the pony.
   B. The bear jumped at the girl.
   C. That is a nice picture of the pony.

2. WE VISIT A FARM

   A. The farmer showed us around his farm.
   B. We found a lost dog at school.
   C. There are many farms in this country.

3. AT THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

   A. The children ate some birthday cake.
   B. The truck rolled down the hill.
   C. Nick saw some party hats in a store.

Item Description

The student reads the story title and then selects the event that should be included in a good story for the story idea conveyed by that title. The title should be broad enough to be amenable to a number of related events in a discernible sequence, yet narrow enough that the possible events have a limit that can be perceived by the student.

The correct answer (all choice A's) should include an activity/event that is significant to the story line and to the necessary sequence of events.

Two kinds of distractors are appropriate for the item at this grade level. One distractor type relates a significant event, but the event is not relevant to the story line (all choice B's). Another distractor type entails a character or activity that refers to the title, but the event described is not important to the story line (all choice C's); because it refers back to the title, this distractor is the most difficult of the three types.

Comment: For ease of administration and scoring, only one correct answer (i.e., one event) is required on the sample items. However, since selecting more than one event is required to produce any narrative, the following item type is possible, although it is perhaps too difficult at this grade level:

W2 GEe 2210 (continued)

Directions: Read the story title and the sentences. Which two sentences would best fit in the story?

1a. A PONY RIDE

A. Lisa got on the pony.
B. The pony ran down the street.
C. The bear jumped at the girl.
D. That is a nice picture of the pony.

Skill: W4 GDe 2220

Skill Statement

Elaborates for narrative writing: Includes events appropriate for a climactic narrative.

Skill Description

The student selects events, incidents, happenings that comprise the content of a climactic narrative. The events selected are ones that (1) can be organized to develop a problem and a solution/resolution to this problem or (2) help develop characters in the story. This skill also entails exclusion: events that do not contribute to (1) or (2) above are not included in the narrative account.

The "appropriate" qualification also refers to the significance of the events. The events must be those that are the most significant for a story of a specified length.

Comment: This is an important subskill of writing a climactic narrative. Although this skill may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students cannot complete narrative products that are listed without employing this skill.

Assessment

Comment: Selected-response items for assessing this skill are described below; however, a writing sample is the preferred assessment. Consequently, this skill is also assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W4 DPpr 3000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the story title and the sentences. Which sentence tells about a happening that best fits the story?

1. THE GIANT FINDS HIS SHOE

A. The giant chased the shoe thief.
B. Sue liked to run fast.
C. The alligator tricked the porcupine.
D. The giant ate his lunch.

W4 GDe 2220 (continued)

2. LOST IN THE WOODS

   A. The frightened boy tried to find his way through the trees.
   B. Linda wanted to ride her bike.
   C. The car crashed into the wall.
   D. The boy smiled when he saw the green trees.

3. THE BIG GAME

   A. Maria hit a long home run.
   B. Tony ate peanuts for breakfast.
   C. The plane ran out of gas and had to land quickly.
   D. It was cold, so the boys and girls wore coats to the game.

Item Description

The stimulus is the title for a hypothetical story. The title is broad enough to be amenable to a number of related events, yet narrow enough that the possible events have a limit that can be perceived by the students. The student reads the story title and then selects the event that should be included in a good story for the story idea conveyed by the title.

The correct answer (all choice A's) is an event that is significant to the story line and that will fit into an appropriate climactic sequencing. One distractor type (all choice B's) consists of a sentence that relates an event that is neither significant in terms of the story line nor relevant to it; this distractor type is the easiest. Another distractor type (all choice C's) relates a significant event, but the event is not relevant to the story line. The third distractor type entails an event or character that refers back to the title, but the event described is not important to the story line (all choice D's). Because this distractor type refers back to the title, it is the most difficult choice.

All answer choices are written in the past tense so that the student's response will not be influenced by his/her recognition of the tense construction most typical of climactic narratives.

Skill: W4 GDe 2230

Skill Statement

Elaborates for narrative writing: Includes simple characters.

Skill Description

In writing a story, the student includes simple characters; they are simple because character development skills are limited at this grade level.

Characters may be included by a number of techniques. The writer may (1) give a direct description of the appearance and personality traits of the character; (2) present the character in activities that enable the reader to infer the character's attributes; (3) reveal reactions to the character from other characters in the story; (4) present the character's internal reactions to events, people, and surroundings. At this grade level, character development will not generally entail more than the first technique, especially the physical description. Further, students may include characters simply by using their names.

Comment: This is an important subskill of writing a climactic narrative because students cannot complete a narrative product without employing this skill.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is'assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W4 DPpr 3000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W3 GDe 2240

Skill Statement

Elaborates for narrative writing: Completes an open-ended story.

Skill Description

The student completes a climactic narrative by adding an appropriate conclusion. An appropriate conclusion presents a logical solution to the problem posed by the story plot; the solution is one that can be expected from the characters portrayed. However, technical knowledge of climactic structure is not prerequisite to this skill, nor is knowledge of the terms problem, solution, character, or conclusion.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Write an ending for the story. It should fit the story. It should not have any new characters.

1. Once there was a scarecrow who loved birds. The scarecrow was unhappy because the birds were afraid of him. "I wish the birds would learn to love me," he cried.

   One day a hunter was chasing some of the birds. They were afraid she would kill them. They could not fly away from their home because the baby birds needed them. "What shall we do?" they cried.

2. The old horse was very sad. A young horse had come back to the barn after a race; he had been the winner. The old horse thought, "It has been a long time since I have run in a race. I was a winner, and now the riders have forgotten me. I am slower now, but I can still run races. I was a winner!" Tears were falling from the eyes of the old horse.

   Just then the other horses began to cry out. They were afraid. A fire had started, and all the horses were trapped in the barn. Even the young winner was frightened.

3. Dan walked to and from school every day. He ran and jumped all day long, too. Dan was very happy, but his shoes were not. They were tired. Besides, Dan did not keep them clean, and they wanted to be clean.

One night the shoes jumped out the window and ran away. The next day Dan could not find his shoes. He did not know what to do. He was sorry he had not taken care of his shoes.

Directions: Which is the best ending for the story?

1. Once there was a scarecrow who loved birds. The scarecrow was unhappy because the birds were afraid of him. "I wish the birds would learn to love me," he cried.

   One day a hunter was chasing some of the birds. They were afraid she would kill them. They could not fly away from their home because the baby birds needed them. "What shall we do?" they cried.

   A. The scarecrow called to the frightened birds, "Come here. I will hide you in my big coat." So they hid until the hunter was gone. Then the birds loved him, and he was very happy.

   B. The scarecrow was mad at the birds because they were making noise. "I will make those birds go away," he said. Then he told the hunter where to find the birds.

   C. Suddenly the hunter went away. Then the birds and the scarecrow were happy.

2. The old horse was very sad. A young horse had come back to the barn after a race; he had been the winner. The old horse thought, "It has been a long time since I have run in a race. I was a winner, and now the riders have forgotten me. I am slower now, but I can still run races. I was a winner!" Tears were falling from the eyes of the old horse.

   Just then the other horses began to cry out. They were afraid. A fire had started, and all the horses were trapped in the barn. Even the young winner was frightened.

   A. The old horse ran to the door and began kicking it. At last the door fell down and all the horses ran out. The old horse was a winner again!

   B. The young horse bravely ran to the door and began kicking it. The old horse cried because he was afraid. At last the door fell down, and all the horses ran out. The young horse was a real winner!

C. The horses kept crying. Their cries were so loud that a brave woman heard them. She came to save them. Then all the horses stopped crying.

3. Dan walked to and from school every day. He ran and jumped all day long, too. Dan was very happy, but his shoes were not. They were tired. Besides, Dan did not keep them clean, and they wanted to be clean.

One night the shoes jumped out the window and ran away. The next day Dan could not find his shoes. He did not know what to do. He was sorry he had not taken care of his shoes.

A. The shoes found out that Dan was sorry, and they came back. Dan never let his shoes get tired or dirty again.

B. The dirty shoes walked to the next town. They were very tired, and they had stepped into lots of dirty water. "Now we are happy," they said.

C. A big dog chased the shoes down the road and caught them. The dog took the shoes back to Dan.

Item Description

The stimulus includes characters that have a simple and obvious problem. The stimulus also includes information that portrays the characters' attitudes/values/personalities so that students can determine which solution is appropriate for these characters.

Considerations for scoring an ending written for the constructed-response format include the following criteria specific to this task:

1. The conclusion is appropriate for the main character.
2. The conclusion is appropriate for the problem.
3. The conclusion solves the problem.
4. The conclusion does not introduce any new characters.

The constructed-response format is much preferred. However, considerations of cost and time may preclude its implementation. Therefore, a selected-response format is included here. Distractors are limited to two, primarily to restrict item length. One distractor provides a solution/conclusion that is incompatible with the main character's attitudes/values/personalities (all type B's). The other distractor presents a solution/conclusion that is inappropriate for or does not solve the problem posed in the stimulus and/or introduces a new character (all type C's).

Skill W3 GDe 2311

Skill Statement

Elaborates for expository writing: includes factual content: information on what, where, when content.

Skill Description

The student includes factual information about an activity or an event. Factual information composes the content of expository writing, the purpose of which is to inform. The information identifies (1) the activity ("what"), (2) the location of the activity ("where"), and (3) the time of the activity ("when"). For example, all three types of information must be present or the message of an invitation is incomplete; in a newspaper article, information about "who" (and possibly "how" and "why") is also included.

Comment: This is an important subskill of writing some expository products. Although this skill may not always be listed separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students cannot complete some of the products that are listed (e.g., newspaper articles, invitations) without employing this skill.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is also assessed by the writing sample that is described for Skill W3 DPpr 6000.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the invitation. What important information must be added to complete the invitation?

1. Please come to the big party at three o'clock this Friday. I will be happy to see you then.

   A. where the party will be
   B. when the party will be held
   C. what you are invited to

2. You are invited to my house at ten o'clock next Saturday. Please come.

   A. what you are invited to at the person's house
   B. where you are invited
   C. when you are to be there

3. I would like you to come to my birthday party at my house. The party will be fun.

   A. when the party will be
   B. what you are invited to
   C. where the party will be

   Comment: The words Friday and Saturday may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus is an invitation with one of the three important informational elements missing. In the first item, the "where" information is missing; in item 2, the "what" information is missing; in the last item, the "when" information is missing.

Invitations should be as short as possible so that students need not spend an inappropriate amount of reading time on the stimulus.

Skill: W4 GDe 2312

Skill Statement

Elaborates for expository writing: Includes factual content: procedural steps.

Skill Description

The student includes the procedural steps that are the factual content of an explanation of a procedure. The content must include the significant steps in the procedure, and the information must be complete and detailed enough for the steps to be understood and implemented. Thus the information must be readily and exactly comprehended.

Factual content does not include hypothetical or creative embellishments. Thus it must be both concise and precise.

This skill is related to Skill W4 GDpo 5100.

Assessment

Comments: This is an important subskill of writing an expository piece that explains a procedure. Although this skill may not always be listed separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students cannot complete procedural explanations without employing this skill.

This skill is assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W4 DPpr 4000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criteria for including important information.

Skill: W5 GDe 2313

Skill Statement

Elaborates for expository writing: Includes factual content: part/whole relationships.

Skill Description

The student includes content about the relationships of parts to their encompassing whole. At this level, part/whole relationships are limited primarily to structural divisions and are included in explanations that deal with how parts are related in space, how they are shaped, and how they fit and are connected with each other.

Comments: This is an important subskill of expository writing--or writing a process analysis/explanation. Although this skill may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students must employ this skill to produce many expository products that are listed.

Many textbooks practice this skill by having students explain how their (the students') inventions work. Such topics are not suggested here because the necessity for providing specific scoring guidelines requires a stimulus that can be described in those guidelines.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W5 DPpr 4000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W6 GDe 2314

Skill Statement

Elaborates for expository discourse: Includes factual content: comparisons/contrasts.

Skill Description

The student includes factual content about comparisons and/or contrasts in a composition. He/she must identify those features/characteristics that are similar or different for the members of the same classification that are being compared/contrasted (e.g., two kinds of animals). The features/characteristics discussed in relation to one member of the class must also be referenced for the other member(s). At this grade level, students should not be required to compare/contrast more than two members of the same class.

Knowledge of the terms comparison and contrast is not prerequisite to this skill.

Comment: Although this skill may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students must employ this skill to produce comparison/contrast products that are listed.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which described for Skill W6 DPpr 4000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W6 GDe 2410

Skill Statement

Elaborates for persuasive writing: States a point of view.

Skill Description

In writing persuasive compositions, the student states his/her point of view. (Other types of elaborating--producing discourse that conveys organized ideas--that are appropriate for persuasive writing at this grade level are Skills W6 GDe 2420 and 2430.) The point of view is one that can and will be supported by subsequent arguments and evidence for arguments. The statement of the point of view is a kind of topic sentence for a persuasive composition.

Comment: This is an important subskill of persuasive writing. Although this skill may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students must employ this skill to produce persuasive products that are listed (e.g., letter to editor).

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for Skill W6 DPpr 5000. Since writing a persuasive composition is a difficult task, some examiners may choose to assess persuasive writing by selected-response items before administering the writing sample. This practice may provide some information about the developmental level of the student's persuasive-writing skills. Therefore, appropriate items for this subskill of persuasive writing are described below.

Sample Items

Directions: When you write a paper to convince people to do something or to believe something, you start by writing a sentence that tells what you want to prove. This sentence is something like a topic sentence.

Read the title of each paper. Then find the sentence that fits the title and tells what you want to prove to your parents.

1. Title: OUR SCHOOL SHOULD HAVE A FOOTBALL TEAM

A. A football team would make a good addition to our school.
B. I saw a good football game last week.
C. Watching football games would give students something worthwhile to do after school.
D. The game of football has an interesting history that can be taught to all of the team.

2. Title: PEOPLE SHOULD READ BOOKS

   A. People can profit from spending time reading books.
   B. I read a good book last week.
   C. Reading books will help students learn new things.
   D. Experience is the best professor when it comes to choosing books.

3. Title: TEACHERS SHOULD NOT GIVE HOMEWORK

   A. Homework is not a necessary part of school.
   B. Pat does not do the homework her teacher gives her.
   C. Homework keeps you from watching television.
   D. Giving examinations is another responsibility teachers should ignore.

Item Description

The stimulus is the title of an imaginary persuasive paper. The student selects from four choices the sentence that states the opinion to be proven in the paper. The correct answer, all choice A's, restates an expanded title, changing and/or omitting some words in the title.

One distractor type gives a personal and specific comment (all choice B's). It is the easiest distractor type, and a student's selecting this distractor suggests that he/she has no understanding of the skill. Another distractor type states an argument for the point of view rather than the point of view itself (all choice C's). The last distractor type states a parallel or coordinate of the topic for which a viewpoint is to be stated (see explanation for Skill W4 GDe 1120). In the second item, for example, choosing books is a coordinate of reading books under the superordinate topic of books. This distractor is cast in comparatively formal diction in order to provide a distractor that precludes the student's selecting the correct answer only because it is the most "intelligent" sounding sentence. This choice is the most difficult distractor type.

Although constructed-response items would more closely simulate elaborating for persuasive discourse, appropriate items would be difficult to construct and score because the stimulus (i.e., the title) would likely elicit a copying response.

Skill: W6 GDe 2420

Skill Statement

Elaborates for persuasive writing: Includes arguments for a point of view.

Skill Description

In writing a persuasive composition, the student includes arguments for a point of view. At this grade level, arguments do not consist of a sequence of points that lead to each other in a chain of logic. Although students may construct such arguments, they are not required because they entail difficult reasoning and ordering skills.

Arguments may be appeals to reason or appeals to emotion (the latter including appeals to authorities). However, all such arguments are referred to as "reasons" in student materials.

Comment: This is an important subskill of persuasive writing. Although this skill may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students must employ this skill to produce persuasive products that are listed (e.g., letter to editor).

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for Skill W6 DPpr 5000. Since writing a persuasive composition is a difficult task, some examiners may choose to assess persuasive writing by selected-response items before administering the writing sample. This practice may provide some information about the developmental level of the student's persuasive-writing skills. Therefore, appropriate items for this subskill of persuasive writing are described below.

Sample Items

Directions: Answer the questions below.

1. Which reason is best to make your parents think that your school should have a football team?

   A. A football team would help us develop pride in our school.
   B. I want to be on the football team.
   C. The President of the United States thinks football is a good sport.
   D. It is embarrassing not to have a football team.

W6 GDe 2420 (continued)

2. Which reason is best to make your parents think that they should read books?

   A. You can find useful information in books.
   B. I want to learn to read faster.
   C. Famous people read books.
   D. Reading books will make you feel important.

3. Which reason is best to make your parents think that teachers should not give homework?

   A. Students could spend their time at home doing things that are just as important as school work.
   B. Tom spent all his time last night doing ten pages of homework.
   C. President Lincoln did not even go to school very long.
   D. Students get sick of doing all that work at home.

   Comment: The name Lincoln may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus is a question that solicits identification of the best argument for a point of view. In each case the question is answered by an appeal to reason rather than emotion, so the words reason and think are used to emphasize the selection of the appropriate argument. Thus the correct answer (all choice A's) is the only appeal to reason included among the four choices.

One distractor type gives a personal comment and is the easiest distractor (all choice B's). A student's selecting this answer suggests that he/she has no understanding of the requirements of the skill. Another distractor type cites an authority (all choice C's). The last distractor type describes an appeal to the emotions rather than to reason (all choice D's). This is the most difficult choice, and its selection indicates that the student understands the concept of the skill but does not differentiate between reasons and emotional motivation.

Although constucted-response items would more closely simulate elaborating for persuasive discourse, appropriate items would be difficult to score because of the subjective nature of a response that gives a "best reason" for a given topic on which the student may have no opinion.

Skill: W6 GDe 2430

Skill Statement

Elaborates for persuasive writing: Includes supporting evidence for arguments.

Skill Description

In writing a persuasive paper, the student expands on an argument (a reason that supports his/her point of view) by giving evidence that clarifies and/or enforces the argument. This evidence may consist of a variety of support, such as facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, citations of authorities.

Comment: This is an important subskill of persuasive writing. Although this skill may not always be included separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students must employ this skill to produce persuasive products that are listed (e.g., letter to editor).

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for Skill W6 DPpr 5000. Since writing a persuasive composition is a difficult task, some examiners may choose to assess persuasive writing by selected-response items before administering the writing sample. This practice may provide some information about the developmental level of the student's persuasive-writing skills. Therefore, appropriate items for this subskill of persuasive writing are described below.

Sample Items

Directions: Answer the questions below.

1. A good argument for your school's having a football team is that students would become good sports. Which sentence is best to prove this argument?

   A. Being a good sport helps a person deal with defeat.
   B. Being a good sport is something I learned a long time ago.
   C. Being a good sport makes you look good to others.
   D. Being a good sport will make you not care when you lose.

2. A good argument for reading books is that they are pleasant to read. Which sentence is best to prove this argument?

   A. Some books tell funny stories and make you laugh.
   B. Some books make me sleepy.
   C. Some books teach you to do things.
   D. Some books help you pass tests.

3. A good argument for teachers not giving homework is that students could spend their time at home in better ways. Which sentence is best to prove this argument?

   A. Students could spend time at home reading good books for pleasure and information.
   B. Tom did ten pages of homework last night.
   C. Students could spend the time having fun when they go home.
   D. Students get sick of doing all that work.

Item Description

The item stem relates an argument that supports an opinion and then asks students to identify which of four choices is the sentence that best proves the argument. The word argument is purposely used because the word reason might predispose the student to select the evidence that supports an appeal to reason even when the argument is an emotional appeal (e.g., in item two, students are asked to select proof for an emotional appeal--that books are pleasant to read).

One distractor is a personal comment and is the easiest distractor type (all choice B's). A student's selecting it suggests that he/she has no understanding of the concept of evidence. The other distractor type states proof for arguments that appeal to a different type of argument (all choices C and D). Thus if the appeal is to the emotions, as in item two, both C and D are proof for an intellectual argument.

Although constructed-response items would more closely simulate elaborating for persuasive discourse, appropriate items would be difficult to score because of the subjective nature of a response that gives "best proof" for a given argument for a topic on which the student may have no opinion.

Skill: W3 GDe 2510

Skill Statement

Elaborates for a letter: Includes request in a letter of invitation.

Skill Description

The student includes in a letter of invitation a request that asks the recipient of the invitation to come to the event described in the invitation. Although formal requests frequently appear in letters of invitation (e.g., "_____ request(s) the honor of your presence . . ."), requests at this grade level are informal and courteous (e.g., "Please come to my party on . . .).

Comment: This is an important subskill of writing a letter of invitation. Although this skill is generally not listed separately on authoritative lists of desired competencies, students cannot complete a letter of invitation without employing this skill.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W3 DPpr 6000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W6 GDe 2520

Skill Statement

Elaborates for a letter: Includes content appropriate for a business letter.

Skill Description

The student includes content that is appropriate for a formal business letter rather than for an informal personal letter. This content includes the appropriate formal salutation (e.g., Dear Ms. Jones rather than Dear Jane) and closing (e.g., Sincerely yours rather than Your friend). It also includes appropriate language (e.g., I am sorry for the mistake rather than I feel lousy about the mistake) and excludes irrelevant and and unnecessary information (e.g., why the student likes color photographs when ordering film for a camera).

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W6 DPpr 7000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item descriptions. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W3 GDpe 1000

Skill Statement

Proofreads for final copy.

Skill Description

The student reads a composition and finds and/or corrects any error(s). Proofreading is an extremely important skill in the preparation of final written documents; thus it is taught and assessed at several grade levels. The student should be able to find and correct errors derived from those writing skills taught and assessed at earlier grade levels; e.g., at grade 3, students should be able to proofread for errors in period and question mark use (grade 2 skills), but not be required to proofread for comma use (grade 4 skills).

Assessment

Comment: Proofreading can be assessed with either constructed-response or selected-response items. The former are preferable because they more closely simulate the actual writing process; however, they may be more difficult to score since students may make a variety of "corrections." Both kinds of items are exemplified below.

(1) Constructed-response assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Underline the mistake in each sentence.

1. I see two boxs in the street.
2. One box is blue and gren.
3. the other box is red and yellow.

Directions: The underlined word or punctuation mark is wrong. Write the correct word or punctuation mark above it.

4. What is that red thing on the table.
5. it is my new coat.
6. I must cros the room to get it.

Directions: Underline the mistake in each sentence. Write the correct word or punctuation mark above it.

7. Yesterday was mi birthday, so I had a party.
8. Lots of friendes came to the party.
9. Linda and mike gave me a good book.

Comment: The words correct, mistake, and punctuation may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

Three different item types of varying difficulty can assess proofreading skills. Each assesses a somewhat different aspect of proofreading. If only one type is used on an assessment instrument, the third is preferable because it is most inclusive.

Each set of items forms a coherent paragraph that is perhaps strained because of the attempt to include appropriate content. Each item (sentence) in the paragraph has one error in it.

In items 1-3, the student must only find the error without correcting it. In items 4-6, the student must correct the indicated error. In items 7-9, the student must both find and correct the error.

Sentences must be carefully written so that students are not misled; that is, unfamiliar constructions that students might think wrong should not be used. The errors and the non-errors should assess skills covered in grades 1 and 2. (These skills are not listed here; they can be easily found by consulting the LSF.) Only a few of the possible error types are illustrated here.

The items can be made more difficult by adding a "no error" response. It is also possible to have more than one error in each sentence (with directions changed accordingly); however, this is probably too difficult for this grade level.

(2) Selected-response assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which underlined word or punctuation mark should be corrected?

1. I see two boxs in the street.
   A B C D

2. One box is blue and gren.
   A B C D

3. the other box is red and yellow.
   A B C D

W3 GDpe 1000 (continued)

Directions: The underlined word or punctuation mark is wrong. What should be used in its place?

4. What is that red thing on the table.

A. ?
B. ,
C. !
D. '

5. it is my new coat.

A. It
B. itt
C. Ite
D. ite

6. I must cros the room to get it.

A. cross
B. cors
C. corss
D. Cros

Directions: What is the mistake in the sentence?

7. Yesterday was mi birthday, so I had a party.

A. was should be was?
B. mi should be my
C. I should be i
D. had should be hade

8. Lots of friendes came to the party.

A. Lots should be Lot
B. friendes should be friends
C. came should be Came
D. . should be ?

9. Linda and mike gave me a good book.

A. and should be ande
B. mike should be Mike
C. gave should be gav
D. book should be buk

Comment: The words correct, mistake, and punctuation may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The three selected-response item types parallel the three constructed-response item types and are subject to the same constraints.

In items 1-3, the student must only find the error without correcting it. Four words and/or punctuation marks are underlined, and the student determines which one is incorrect. The correct, underlined words and punctuation marks (i.e., the distractors) should be ones with which students might be expected to make and correct errors at this grade level, e.g., words that students should spell correctly, but might not (such as red, but not yellow, because the latter word requires higher grade-level spelling skills).

In items 4-6, the student must correct an indicated error. Three incorrect choices are given; they may be all of one type (e.g., item 4, with punctuation) or more than one type (e.g., items 5 and 6, with spelling and capitalization); mixed types are often necessary to provide a sufficient number of distractors. The distractors should be constructed according to the guidelines for the specific skills described elsewhere in this document.

In items 7-9, the student must both find and correct the error. Four possible "corrections" are given, only one of which is correct (the other three create errors). The incorrect "corrections" are constructed according to the distractor guidelines for the specific skills described elsewhere in this document. They are ordered by their occurrence in the sentence.

All of the item types can be made easier by limiting the choices to three; they can be made more difficult by adding a "none of these" or "no error" response.

Skill: W4 GDpe 1000

Skill Statement

Proofreads for final copy.

Skill Description

The student reads a composition and finds and/or corrects any error(s). Proofreading is an extremely important skill in the preparation of final written documents; thus it is taught and assessed at several grade levels. The student should be able to find and correct errors derived from those writing skills taught and assessed at earlier grade levels; e.g., at grade 4, students should be able to proofread for errors in personal letters (grade 3 skills), but not be required to proofread business letters (grade 5 skills).

Assessment

Comment: Proofreading can be assessed with either constructed-response or selected-response items. The former are preferable because they more closely simulate the actual writing process; however, they may be more difficult to score since students may make a variety of "corrections." Both kinds of items are exemplified below.

(1) Constructed-response assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Underline the mistake in each part.*

1. June 28, 1979

Dear Joe!

2. Thank you far the good books.
3. I will read them on friday.

Your friend,
Jean

Directions: The underlined word or punctuation mark is wrong. Write the correct word or punctuation mark above it.

4. 333 High street
Lakewood, NY 10534
5. May 22. 1979

6. dear Ana,

---

*When less complex discourse is used, the directions read "each sentence."

Directions: Underline the mistake in each part.* Write the correct word or punctuation mark above it.

7. Please come to an birthday party for Dan.
8. It will be on june 6 at 3:00 at my house.

9. { Yours truly.
Sue

Comment: The words correct and punctuation may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

Three different item types of varying difficulty can assess proofreading skills. Each assesses a somewhat different aspect of proofreading. If only one type is used on an assessment instrument, the third is preferable because it is most inclusive.

Each set of items forms a coherent letter or section of a letter (the second and third sets form one letter). The letter form is used because it is an important grade 3 skill that can incorporate a variety of errors. Each item (sentence or other part of the letter) has one error in it.

In items 1-3, the student must only find the error without correcting it. In items 4-6, the student must correct the indicated error. In items 7-9, the student must both find and correct the error.

Sentences and letter parts must be carefully written so that students are not misled; that is, unfamiliar constructions that students might think wrong should not be used. The errors and the non-errors should assess skills covered in grades 1-3. (These skills are not listed here; they can be easily found by consulting the LSF.) Only a few of the possible error types are illustrated here.

The items can be made more difficult by adding a "no error" response. It is also possible to have more than one error in each sentence or letter part (with directions changed accordingly); however, this may be too difficult for this grade level.

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*When less complex discourse is used, the directions read "each sentence."

(2) Selected-response assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which underlined word or punctuation mark should be corrected?

1. $\underset{A}{\underline{\text{June}}}$ 28$\underset{B}{\underline{,}}$ 1979

$\underset{C}{\underline{\text{Dear}}}$ Joe$\underset{D}{\underline{!}}$

2. $\underset{A}{\underline{\text{Thank}}}$ you $\underset{B}{\underline{\text{far}}}$ the $\underset{C}{\underline{\text{good}}}$ $\underset{D}{\underline{\text{books}}}$.

3. $\underset{A}{\underline{\text{I}}}$ will read $\underset{B}{\underline{\text{them}}}$ on $\underset{C}{\underline{\text{friday}}}$.

Your friend$\underset{D}{\underline{,}}$

Jean

Directions: The underlined word or punctuation mark is wrong. What should be used in its place?

4. 333 High $\underline{\text{street}}$
Lakewood, NY 10534
5. May 22$\underline{.}$ 1979

6. $\underline{\text{dear}}$ Ana,

4. A. Street
   B. ,street
   C. street,
   D. STreet

5. A. ,
   B. ?
   C. !
   D. '

6. A. Dear
   B. dear,
   C. DEAR
   D. daer

Directions: What is the mistake in each part?

7. Please come to an birthday party for Dan.
8. It will be on june 6 at 3:00 at my house.

9. Yours truly.
Sue

7. A. Please should be please
B. an should be a
C. Dan should be dan
D. . should be ?

8. A. It should be it
B. will should be wil
C. june should be June
D. my should be mi

9. A. Yours should be yours
B. truly should be Truly
C. . should be ,
D. Sue should be sue

Comment: The words correct and punctuation may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The three selected-response item types parallel the three constructed-response item types and are subject to the same constraints.

In items 1-3, the student must only find the error without correcting it. Four words and/or punctuation marks are underlined, and the student determines which one is incorrect. The correct, underlined words and punctuation marks (i.e., the distractors) should be ones with which students might be expected to make and correct errors at this grade level.

In items 4-6, the student must correct an indicated error. Three incorrect choices are given; they may be all of one type (e.g., item 5, with punctuation) or more than one type (e.g., item 6, with spelling, punctuation, and capitalization); mixed types are often necessary to provide a sufficient number of distractors. The distractors should be constructed according to the guidelines for the specific skills described elsewhere in this document.

In items 7-9, the student must both find and correct the error. Four possible "corrections" are given, only one of which is correct (the other three create errors). The incorrect "corrections" are constructed according to the distractor guidelines for the specific skills described elsewhere in this document. They are ordered by their occurrence in the sentence.

All of the item types can be made easier by limiting the choices to three; they can be made more difficult by adding a "none of these" or "no error" response.

Skill: W5 GDpe 1000

Skill Statement

Proofreads for final copy.

Skill Description

The student reads a composition and finds and/or corrects any error(s). Proofreading is an extremely important skill in the preparation of final written documents; thus it is taught and assessed at several grade levels. The student should be able to find and correct errors derived from those writing skills taught and assessed at earlier grade levels; e.g., at Grade 5, students should be able to proofread for errors in doubling the final consonant when adding suffixes to one-syllable words (Grade 4 skill), but not be required to proofread for doubling when adding suffixes to two-syllable words (Grade 6 skill).

Assessment

Comment: Proofreading can be assessed with either constructed-response or selected-response items. The former are preferable because they more closely simulate the actual writing process; however, they may be more difficult to score since students may make a variety of "corrections." Both kinds of items are exemplified below.

(1) Constructed-response assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Underline the mistake in each sentence.

1. Last week I went to Anns party.
2. It was her birth day party.
3. Furst we played a lot of games.

Directions: The underlined word or punctuation mark is wrong. Write the correct word or punctuation mark above it.

4. I wun prizes for some of the games.
5. Then Ann lookked at her gifts.
6. She got manny nice things.

Directions: Underline the mistake in each sentence. Write the correct word or punctuation mark above it.

7. Then we eight some food.
8. We had salad cake, and ice cream.
9. After that, we oll went home.

Item Description

Three different item types of varying difficulty can assess proofreading skills. Each assesses a somewhat different aspect of proofreading. If only one type is used on an assessment instrument, the third is preferable because it is most inclusive.

Each set of items forms a coherent paragraph that is perhaps strained because of the attempt to include appropriate content. Each item (sentence) in the paragraph has one error in it.

In items 1-3, the student must only find the error without correcting it. In items 4-6, the student must correct the indicated error. In items 7-9, the student must both find and correct the error.

Sentences must be carefully written so that students are not misled; that is, unfamiliar constructions that students might think wrong should not be used. The errors and the non-errors should assess skills covered in Grades 1-4. (These skills are not listed here; they can be easily found by consulting the LSF.) Only a few of the possible error types are illustrated here.

The items can be made more difficult by adding a "no error" response. It is also possible to have more than one error in each sentence (with directions changed accordingly); however, this may be too difficult for this grade level.

(2) Selected-response assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which underlined word or punctuation mark should be corrected?

1. Last (A) week I went (B) to Anns (C) party (D).

2. It (A) was (B) her birth day (C) party (D).

3. Furst (A) we played (B) a lot (C) of games. (D)

Directions: The underlined word or punctuation mark is wrong. What should be used in its place?

4. I wun prizes for some of the games.

   A. one
   B. won
   C. wune
   D. wone

5. Then Ann lookked at her gifts.

   A. looked
   B. looking
   C. lookking
   D. loked

6. She got manny nice things.

   A. many
   B. meny
   C. menny
   D. mane

Directions: What is the mistake in each sentence?

7. Then we eight some food.

   A. Then should be then
   B. we should be wee
   C. eight should be ate
   D. some should be sum

8. We had salad cake, and ice cream.

   A. had should be has
   B. salad should be salad,
   C. cake should be cacke
   D. ice cream should be icecream

9. After that, we oll went home.

   A. After should be Aftur
   B. oll should be all
   C. went should be goed
   D. home should be hom

Item Description

The three selected-response item types parallel the three constructed-response item types and are subject to the same constraints.

In items 1-3, the student must only find the error without correcting it. Four words and/or punctuation marks are underlined and the student determines which one is incorrect. The correct, inderlined words and punctuation marks (i.e., the distractors) should be ones with which students might be expected to make and correct errors at this grade level.

In items 4-6, the student must correct an indicated error. Three incorrect choices are given; they may be all of one type (e.g., items 4 and 6 with spelling) or more than one type (e.g., item 7, with spelling and verb form); mixed types are often necessary to provide a sufficient number of distractors. The distractors should be constructed according to the guidelines for the specific skills described elsewhere in this document.

In items 7-9, the student must both find and correct the error. Four possible "corrections" are given, only one of which is correct (the other three create errors). The incorrect "corrections" are constructed according to the distractor guidelines for the specific skills described elsewhere in this document. They are ordered by their occurrence in the sentence.

All of the item types can be made easier by limiting the choices to three; they can be made more difficult by adding a "none of these" or "no error" response.

Skill: W6 GDpe 1000

Skill Statement

Proofreads for final copy.

Skill Description

The student reads a composition and finds and/or corrects any error(s). Proofreading is an extremely important skill in the preparation of final written documents; thus it is taught and assessed at several grade levels. The student should be able to find and correct errors derived from those writing skills taught and assessed at earlier grade levels; e.g., at grade 6, students should be able to proofread for errors in subject-verb agreement for sentences in normal word order (skills for grades 4 and 5), but not be required to proofread for agreement when the verb precedes the subject (grade 6 skill).

Assessment

Comment: Proofreading can be assessed with either constructed-response or selected-response items. The former are preferable because they more closely simulate the actual writing process; however, they may be more difficult to score since students may make a variety of "corrections." Both kinds of items are exemplified below.

(1) Constructed-response assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Circle the mistake in each part. Write the correct form above it.*

1.

Big Bluff, TX 75001
1045 Woodside Drive
September 11, 1979

Ms. Sharon Crew
Crew Electric Company
100 West Sixth Street
Chicago, IL 60611

2. Dear Ms. Crew,

3. The electric knife you cent me does not work.

---

*When less complex discourse is used, the directions read, "Underline the mistake in each sentence. Write the correct word or punctuation mark above it."

Directions: Underline the mistake in each sentence.

4. I baught it from you in July.
5. It worked fine then, but it does'nt now.
6. What should I do with it. Ms. Crew?

Directions: The underlined word or punctuation mark is wrong. Write the correct word or punctuation mark above it.

7. Shall I reeturn it for a new one?
8. Please let me no how I can have it working again.

9. Your friend,
David Dodge

Item Description

Three different item types of varying difficulty can assess proofreading skills. Each assesses a somewhat different aspect of proofreading. If only one type is used on an assessment instrument, the first (items 1-3) is preferable because it is most inclusive.

Each set of items forms part of a letter. The letter form is used because it is an important grade 5 skill that can incorporate a variety of errors. Each item (sentence or other section of the letter) has one error in it.

In items 1-3, the student must both find and correct the error. In items 4-6, the student must only find the error without correcting it. In items 7-9, the student must correct the indicated error.

Sentences must be carefully written so that students are not misled; that is, unfamiliar constructions that students might think wrong should not be used. The errors and the non-errors should assess skills covered in grades 1-5. (These skills are not listed here; they can be easily identified by consulting the LSF.) Only a few of the possible error types are illustrated here.

The items can be made more difficult by adding a "no error" response. It is also possible to have more than one error in each sentence (with directions changed accordingly); however, this may be too difficult even for this grade level.

(2) Selected-response assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which part* should be corrected?

---

*When less complex discourse is used, the directions read, "Which underlined word or punctuation mark should be corrected?"

1.
Big Bluff, TX 75001
A. 1045 Woodside Drive
September 11, 1979

B. Ms. Sharon Crew
C. Crew Electric Company
D. 100 West Sixth Street
Chicago IL 60611

Directions: Which underlined word or punctuation mark should be corrected?

2. $\underset{A}{\underline{\text{Dear}}}\ \underset{B}{\underline{\text{Ms.}}}\ \underset{C}{\underline{\text{Crew}}}\ \underset{D}{\underline{,}}$

3. The electric $\underset{A}{\underline{\text{knife}}}$ you $\underset{B}{\underline{\text{cent}}}$ me $\underset{C}{\underline{\text{does}}}$ not $\underset{D}{\underline{\text{work}}}$.

Directions: The underlined word or punctuation mark is wrong. What should be used in its place?

4. I $\underline{\text{baught}}$ it from you in July.
5. It worked fine then, but it $\underline{\text{does'nt}}$ now.
6. What should I do with it$\underline{.}$ Ms. Crew?

4. A. bought
   B. bot
   C. baut
   D. bout

5. A. doesn't
   B. does nt
   C. doesnt'
   D. does'not

6. A. ,
   B. ?
   C. !
   D. no punctuation mark

Directions: What is the mistake in each part?*

7. Shall I reeturn it for a new one?
8. Please let me no how I can have it working again.

9. Your friend,
David Dodge

---

*When less complex discourse is used, the directions read "each sentence."

7. A. Shall should be shall
B. reeturn should be return
C. new should be knew
D. one should won

8. A. let should be let's
B. no should be know
C. have should be hav
D. again should be agen

9. A. Your should be your
B. Your friend should be Sincerely
C. , should be :
D. David Dodge should be Dave

Item Description

The three selected-response item types parallel the three constructed-response item types and are subject to the same constraints. (The order of item types is varied here because of the use of the letter form.)

In items 1-3 (cf. constructed-response items 4-6), the student must only find the error without correcting it. Four words, punctuation marks, and/or letter parts are marked, and the student determines which one is incorrect. The correct words, punctuation marks, and letter parts (i.e., the distractors) should be ones with which students might be expected to make and correct errors at this grade level, e.g., words that students should spell correctly but might not (such as sent, but not electric, which may require higher grade-level spelling skills).

In items 4-6 (cf. constructed-response items 7-9), the student must correct an indicated error. Three incorrect choices are given; they may be all of one type (as illustrated) or more than one type (e.g., mixing spelling and capitalization--not illustrated); mixed types are often necessary to provide a sufficient number of distractors. The distractors should be constructed according to the guidelines for the specific skills described elsewhere in this document.

In items 7-9 (cf. constructed-response items 1-3), the student must both find and correct the error. Four possible "corrections" are given, only one of which is correct (the other three create errors). The incorrect "corrections" are constructed according to the distractor guidelines for the specific skills described elsewhere in this document. They are ordered by their occurrence in the sentence.

All of the item types can be made easier by limiting the choices to three; they can be made more difficult by adding a "none of these" or "no error" response.

Skill: W3 GDpe 2000

Skill Statement

Separates long sentences by deleting and.

Skill Description

The student deletes the sentence coordinator and from long sentences to form two (or more) shorter sentences.

The deletion of and is an editing skill that is especially needed in narrative writing because elementary school children often chain events together through the use of and. Although and is acceptable when connecting two clauses of moderate length, it is generally not preferred (1) when connecting two long clauses or (2) when two or more and's are used to connect several clauses. Such usage is not grammatically incorrect; rather, it is stylistically inappropriate. This skill is related to Skill W2 Mc 2000: Capitalizes first word of a sentence, and Skill W2 Mp 1100: Uses period to end a declarative sentence.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: This sentence is too long. Rewrite the sentence to make two shorter sentences.

1. The other morning I walked to my friend Jan's house so that we could play together and when I got there I found out that she was not home.

2. Our teacher asked us if we would like to put on a play for the rest of the school and all of us told her that we thought it was a wonderful idea.

3. When my father took a job in the city, we moved to a new house and I was very excited about going to a new school so that I could meet some new friends.

Directions: This sentence is too long. Which word with a letter under it should be taken out to make two shorter sentences.

4. The game was very exciting and our team won and
A B C
now we are in first place.
D

5. Our class went to the zoo and we saw many animals
A B C
and everyone had a good time.
D

6. The dogs were barking all night and I couldn't sleep
A B

and so I was very tired in the morning.
C D

Comment: The words sentence and rewrite may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus for items 1-3 is a sentence containing two long clauses that are joined by the clausal coordinator and. The student rewrites the sentence into two shorter sentences by deleting and. Although proper punctuation and capitalization are normally deemed essential to the formation of a proper sentence, these skills are assessed elsewhere and should not be considered in this assessment if the student's intent is otherwise clear.

The stimulus for items 4-6 is a long sentence containing three short clauses that are joined by the clausal coordinator and. The student selects one of the four words as the proper word to remove in order to form two shorter sentences.

Since each sentence in items 4-6 contains two and's, and either or both and could be removed to form correct sentences, only one and is indicated for possible removals. Two of the distractors (e.g., B and C in item 5) are words that could be deleted from the sentence without rendering it incomplete or without changing its overall meaning. The final distractor (e.g., C in item 4) is a word that cannot be deleted without creating an ungrammatical sentence.

With a slight change in directions, the two formats given in the sample items are interchangeable. For example, directions for items 4-6 could be modified to read, "This sentence is too long. Rewrite the sentence to make three shorter sentences." Conversely, appropriate words could be indicated in items 1-3 and directions given as in items 4-6. Since the rewriting task more nearly parallels actual editing practice, it is the preferred mode of assessment.

Skill: W6 GDpe 3000

Skill Statement

Varies the structure and length of sentences in a paragraph.

Skill Description

When writing a paragraph, the student uses sentences of various structures and lengths (cf. Skill Lsp 1000: Constructs a variety of sentence structures). This process is intended to improve the quality of the paragraph.

Paragraphs written with sentences of the same structure and length tend to be monotonous and stylistically uninteresting; they also tend to attract attention to the syntax rather than to the meaning. Structure and length can be varied in a number of ways; a few types of variations are listed below:

(1) transformations; e.g., active-passive, movement (i.e., moving clauses and phrases from final to initial sentence position, and vice versa),

(2) coordination; e.g., joining independent sentences/clauses with and, or, but, frequently with deletion of repeated words,

(3) subordination; e.g., converting independent sentences/clauses into relative clauses or adverbial clauses,

(4) simple sentences.

At this level, students can be minimally expected to vary structure and length by using both simple sentences and coordination.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is indirectly assessed by a writing sample for this grade level, which is described for skill W6 DPpr 4000. See those specifications for the sample item and item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W5 GDpe 4000

Skill Statement

Removes unrelated sentences.

Skill Description

Having written a draft of a composition, the student rereads it and removes any sentences that are not directly related to the topic. These unrelated sentences usually have some tangential association with the topic, but do not directly relate to the preceding and following content. This editing skill is critical to the preparation of a well organized final product.

For assessment purposes, the "draft" is usually provided for the student to edit. In addition, the draft is generally short (e.g., paragraph length).

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Read the paragraph. One sentence does not belong in the paragraph. Which sentence should be taken out?

1. What an Apple is Like

An apple is a round fruit that grows on trees. It is usually red on the outside. An apple has a stem at the top. The apple's skin is a little tough. I don't like apples. The inside of the apple is softer. The inside is a kind of white. It tastes sweet. At the center of the apple are the apple seeds.

A. I don't like apples.
B. An apple has a stem at the top.
C. The apple's skin is a little tough.
D. The inside is a kind of white.

2. Kids Should Not Have Homework

I believe that kids should not have homework. Homework takes too much time away from other important things. If you do homework, you cannot play with your friends. You cannot play sports or practice the piano. You cannot read books or magazines. You cannot have hobbies. My hobby is collecting stamps. It is important to do these other things. So I think kids should not have homework.

A. My hobby is collecting stamps.
B. If you do homework, you cannot play with your friends.
C. You cannot have hobbies.
D. It is important to do these other things.

3. My Trip

This summer my family went to the Grand Canyon. We camped out in tents. One night it rained, but we didn't get wet. Last year we got wet because we had old tents then. The Grand Canyon is very beautiful. It is deep and has many different colors. We rode mules to the bottom of the canyon. Then we came home. It was a good trip.

A. Last year we got wet because we had old tents then.
B. One night it rained, but we didn't get wet.
C. The Grand Canyon is very beautiful.
D. Then we came home.

Item Description

The stimulus is a paragraph (or a set of paragraphs) containing at least six sentences. One sentence (other than the first or last) does not belong in the paragraph because it is not directly related to the topic. It may be unrelated because the sentence is too general (cf. item 1) or too specific (cf. item 2) or because the sentence is only tangentially related to the topic (cf. item 3). It must have some semantic relation to the paragraph, but not a direct relation to the topic.

The correct answer is, of course, the unrelated sentence (all choices A above). The distractors are three other sentences from the paragraph, excluding the first and last sentences, which commonly are topic or summarizing sentences.

Comment: A constructed-response item can be easily prepared by using the same stimulus paragraph(s) and asking students to cross out the sentence that does not belong.

Skill: W5 GDpe 5000

Skill Statement

Removes redundancy.

Skill Description

Having written a draft of a composition, the student rereads it and removes words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that are redundant--that repeat content already said. This editing skill is critical to the preparation of a concise, non-wordy final product.

Sometimes word or phrase redundancy comes as a result of trying, unnecessarily, to clarify or emphasize a word or phrase; e.g.:

My friends, or buddies, were having a good time.

Redundancy at the sentence or paragraph level generally involves saying something twice, perhaps with slightly different wording, but without adding enough significant new information; e.g.:

I am sad. I am not happy.
Last week was my birthday. My birthday was on June 18th.

Redundancy other than grammatical redundancy is frequently difficult to define. Good writers make effective use of repetitive elements, but such repetition is not considered redundant.

Comment: Redundancy at the word level is commonly ungrammatical in standard English written usage as well. This type of redundancy is covered by Skill W6 GDpe 7000: Removes ungrammatical language.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Cross out the phrase or sentence that repeats something that is already said.

1. John loves animals. He has three dogs, two cats, and a rabbit. He feeds his pets, or animals, every day.

2. Our team won the game by just one point. The other team was ahead for a long time. We scored in the last minute. The final score was very close.

3. My parents took me to the circus. We had a great time. The clowns put on the best act. The lions were scary. I went with my mother and father.

Directions: Which phrase or sentence should be left out because it repeats something that is already said?

4. John loves animals. He has three dogs, two cats, and
A B
a rabbit. He feeds his pets, or animals, every day.
C D

5. Our team won the game by just one point. The other
A
team was ahead for a long time. We scored in the
B C
last minute. The final score was very close.
D

6. My parents took me to the circus. We had a great time.
A
The clowns put on the best act. The lions were scary.
B C
I went with my mother and father.
D

Comment: The word phrase may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus is a short paragraph. One phrase or sentence in the paragraph repeats or restates a fact or element that is presented earlier in the paragraph. The student reads the paragraph and identifies the redundant phrase or sentence.

Items 1-3 are constructed-response items for which the student must locate and cross out the redundant element. Item 1 is an example of word or phrase redundancy. The word animals is used as the object of the first sentence and again, unnecessarily, as a clarifying phrase in the third sentence. Items 2 and 3 reflect redundancy in which the wording has been changed. In item 2, the first sentence states that the team won by just one point. The redundancy occurs in the final sentence: The final score was very close. In item 3, the first sentence indicates that My parents were responsible for the trip. The reworded redundancy in the final sentence refers to my mother and father.

In preparing such items it is important that only gross redundancies be used. Effective repetition may be mistaken for redundancy when students are asked to focus on this particular task. Although this is a difficult skill, constructed-response assessment more nearly approaches actual editing practice and is the preferred mode of assessment.

Items 4-6 are selected-response items. This is a simpler task for which the student must choose the redundant phrase or sentence from four underlined elements.

The distractors may be phrases or entire sentences. They should reflect elements that occur only once in the paragraph. The element that is rephrased or restated later in the paragraph must not be used as a distractor.

It should be noted that, in the sample items given, the correct answer is either C or D. If a larger number of similar items were presented for assessment, it would be desirable to have either choice A or B as the correct answer in some items. This requisite can be met by writing longer items and placing all distractors, as well as the redundant element, late in the paragraph.

Skill: W5 GDpe 6100

Skill Statement

Rewords text to avoid word repetition: Substitutes pronouns for nouns.

Skill Description

The student edits written text to remove repetitious nouns by substituting the appropriate pronouns. The two passages below illustrate this editing process.

Original Text:	Lisa tasted the pie. Lisa liked the pie. In fact, it was the best pie that Lisa's brother had ever baked.
Edited Text:	Lisa tasted the pie. She liked it. In fact, it was the best pie that her brother had ever baked.

Substituting pronouns for nouns is an important editing skill that requires the student to exercise fairly sophisticated judgment. Although the use of pronouns can eliminate repetition, excessive use can result in ambiguous pronoun referents; e.g.:

> John and Mary went fishing for trout with their aunt and uncle. They spent all day waiting for them to bite. Finally, he caught one, but she never even had a nibble. They just didn't seem to be hungry that day.

Assessment of this skill, then, should ensure that the student can substitute pronouns where appropriate, yet still avoid confusion between the pronouns and their referents.

This skill is related to and assumes knowledge of Skill W5 Lu 6100: Uses pronouns appropriately: nominative forms vs. objective forms after verbs, and Skill W5 Lu 6200: Uses pronouns appropriately: nominative forms vs. objective forms after prepositions.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: One word or group of words has been used too many times. For one of these times, a pronoun can replace the word or group of words. Cross that one out and write the correct pronoun above it.

1. Greg borrowed a book from Sue. After he read it,

   he gave it back to Sue.

2. Alicia has a dog named Pilot. She likes to teach him new tricks. She even taught Pilot to jump through a hoop.

3. My mother works in a bank. The people who work for her think that my mother is a good leader.

Directions: Which underlined word or words should be changed?

4. Greg borrowed a book from Sue. After he read it, he gave it back to Sue.

   A. Sue should be her.
   B. Greg should be He.
   C. he should be Greg.

5. Alicia has a dog named Pilot. She likes to teach him new tricks. She even taught Pilot to jump through a hoop.

   A. Pilot should be him.
   B. Alicia should be She.
   C. him should be Pilot.

6. My mother works in a bank. Many people work for her. They think that my mother is a good leader.

   A. my mother should be she.
   B. Many people should be they.
   C. her should be my mother.

   Comment: The word pronoun may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

Either a constructed-response or a selected-response format may be employed in assessing this skill. The stimulus for both formats is a group of related sentences in which a particular noun is overused. Each item contains at least three nouns, but only the target noun is used more than once. The target noun is introduced in the first sentence. To avoid gross redundancy, at least one sentence or phrase precedes the second and final use of the target noun.

For the constructed-response format, the student must cross out the overused noun and above it write a pronoun that agrees with its antecedent in both case and gender. For item 1, the target noun is Sue. The student must cross out the second appearance of Sue and write in the pronoun her. Item 2 calls for the student to cross out Pilot in the third sentence and write in the pronoun him. The overused phrase in item 3 is my mother. The student must cross out my mother in the second sentence and write in the pronoun she.

The selected-response items (items 4-6) require the student to choose the correct pronoun substitution (all A's) from three choices. Two nouns (or noun phrases), including the final occurrence of the overused noun, and a pronoun for the overused noun are underlined in the stimulus. Answer choices reflect grammatically correct substitutions for the underlined items. Choice B is a pronoun substitution that results in the overuse of a pronoun, while choice C is a noun substitution that results in the overuse of a noun.

Since the constructed-response task more nearly parallels self-generated editing, it is the preferred mode of assessment.

Skill: W6 GDpe 6200

Skill Statement

Rewords text to avoid word repetition: Substitutes synonyms for overused terms.

Skill Description

The student edits written text to remove repetitious, overused words by substituting appropriate synonyms. Word repetition in a text attracts undesirable attention to the diction, therefore interfering with comprehension of content. Moreover, such repetition can lead to boredom for the reader. Thus using this revision technique can improve the quality of a text.

In order to effect this skill, the student must recognize that repetition exists and must know synonyms for the repeated words (see Skill W3 Ld 2000).

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: One word in the paragraph is used too many times. Where the word is used the last time, cross it out and write another word that has the same meaning.

1. I don't get sick very often, but yesterday I was very sick. I was too sick to go to school.

2. How many people shall we ask to come to the party? Should we ask Bill to come? Shall we ask Mary?

3. This is a fast race. All of the runners are very fast. The leader is setting a fast pace.

Directions: One word in the paragraph is used too many times. Which word should be replaced by a word that has the same meaning?

4. I don't get sick very often, but yesterday I was very sick. I was too sick to go to school.

A. sick should be ill.
B. don't should be do not.
C. school should be class.

W6 GDpe 6200 (continued)

5. How many people shall we ask to come to the party? Should we ask Bill to come? Shall we ask Mary?

A. ask should be invite.
B. people should be persons.
C. come should be travel.

6. This is a fast race. All of the runners are very fast. The leader is setting a fast pace.

A. fast should be rapid.
B. runners should be people.
C. leader should be winner.

Item Description

Either a constructed-response format (items 1-3) or a selected-response format (items 4-6) may be employed in assessing this skill.

For items 1-3, the student must locate the overused word and generate an appropriate synonym. The stimulus is a short paragraph. The target word is introduced in the first sentence of the paragraph and is then repeated twice. The student crosses out the last use of target word and replaces it with a synonym.

In evaluating responses to the constructed-response assessment, examiners must allow for differences in style and preference. For example, "a fast pace" (item 3) may become "a rapid pace," "a swift pace," or even " a quick pace." Each has merit and represents a matter of preference rather than a degree of correctness.

The selected-response items (items 4-6) require the student to choose the correct synonym substitution (all A's) from three choices. Three words, including the final occurrence of the overused word, are underlined in the stimulus. Answer choices reflect grammatically correct substitutions for the underlined items. Choices B and C are synonym substitutions for words that are used only once in the stimulus.

Skill: W6 GDpe 7000

Skill Statement

Removes ungrammatical language.

Skill Description

The student edits written discourse to remove two common ungrammatical constructions: (1) double negatives (e.g., We didn't have no money) and (2) double subjects (My sister she plays baseball).

Double negatives often occur in sentences containing an auxiliary verb contracted with not (e.g., couldn't, didn't). The faulty construction can be corrected in one of two ways:

(1) The auxiliary-not contraction can be deleted from the sentence after the tense/person/number inflection of the auxiliary is shifted to the main verb; e.g.:

We didn't have no money. → We had no money.

(2) The negative adjective or negative pronoun can be replaced with a non-negative substitute; e.g.:

We didn't have no money. → We didn't have any money.

Double subjects are ungrammatical constructions in which a subject noun and its pronoun substitute are both used as subjects of a sentence. This often occurs when the subject noun is followed by a modifying phrase (e.g., A friend of mine he saw that movie). Double subjects are normally corrected by deleting the pronoun; e.g.:

A friend of mine he saw that movie. → A friend of mine saw that movie.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Each numbered sentence has one mistake. Which revised sentence is correct?

1. We don't have no more money.

A. We have no more money.
B. We do not have no more money.
D. We didn't have no more money.

2. My brother didn't do nothing.

   A. My brother didn't do anything.
   B. My brother didn't do none.
   C. My brother did not do nothing.

3. Tom's sister she plays baseball.

   A. Tom's sister plays baseball.
   B. Tom's she plays baseball.
   C. Sister she plays baseball.

4. A friend of mine he saw that movie.

   A. A friend of mine saw that movie.
   B. My friend he saw that movie.
   C. A friend he saw that movie.

Directions: Read each sentence. There is one mistake in each sentence. Rewrite each sentence so that it is correct.

5. We don't have no more money.

   [We don't have any more money or We have no more money.]

6. Tom's sister she plays baseball.

   [Tom's sister plays baseball or She plays baseball.]

Item Description

The stimulus is a declarative sentence containing either a double negative (items 1, 2, and 5) or a double subject (items 3, 4, and 6). In the selected-response item type (items 1-4), the student chooses the sentence in which the ungrammatical construction has been correctly revised (all choice A's).

Distractors are revised sentences in which the changes have no effect on the ungrammatical construction. For example, changing the contraction don't into its component elements, do not, does not correct the double negative in item 1 (i.e., We don't have no more money → We do not have no more money). Similarly, deleting the prepositional phrase of mine in item 4 does not correct the double subject (i.e., A friend of mine he saw that movie → A friend he saw that movie).

> Comment: In items 3 and 4, the double subjects are corrected by deleting the pronoun. Although these sentences can also be corrected by deleting the subject noun and its modifiers (e.g., Tom's sister she plays baseball → She plays baseball), students might find this revision confusing because it does not contain all the information from the original sentence. Therefore, this revision should not be included in selected-response items.

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However, in the constructed-response item type (see item 6), this revision should be scored as a correct response.

Answer choices are limited to three in items 1-4 in order to minimize the reading task. Four answer choices can be used, but this will increase the emphasis on the student's reading ability.

Items 5 and 6 are constructed-response adaptations of the selected-response items. The student is given a sentence containing a double negative or double subject and is directed to revise the sentence. This item type more closely resembles the actual proofreading/editing process; thus it provides a more accurate measure of the student's mastery of the skill. However, some latitude should be allowed when scoring these items. The important criterion for evaluating the response should be whether or not the student has corrected the ungrammatical construction. Any other slight changes in wording should be ignored. For example, the student might revise item 5 to We didn't have any money. Such a response should be rated as correct. However, revisions that contain grammatical errors other than those being assessed here (e.g., We doesn't have any more money) should be scored as incorrect.

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